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APRIL
1911

PRICE 25cts

THE SMART SET

A
MAG
AZINE
OF

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"The
Mask
of Truth"

A Complete Novel

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

JOHN ADAMS THAYER CORPORATION
PUBLISHERS

LONDON

452 Fifth Avenue, New York

PARIS



THREE CLIPPINGS and a "BUT—"

THE SMART SET, which, since I founded it in 1900, has made profits of over half a million dollars, has been sold. The purchaser is John Adams Thayer, who made such a remarkable success as one of the publishers of *Everybody's Magazine*. I did not wish to sell the SMART SET; it has bulked large in my life for more than a decade. I wanted a publisher for it, and, after reading Mr. Thayer's business autobiography, "Astir," which appeared not long ago, I picked him as the ideal coworker. Frankly, I offered him, free of payment, almost a half interest, as the potential value of the property with the right publisher would have been very great. My offer, for certain reasons, was declined, and realizing that, in Mr. Thayer's hands, the prosperity of the SMART SET would be better conserved, and that its distinctive character as "A magazine of cleverness," given it by its first editor, would be not only maintained but intensified, I decided to sell outright, and have therefore disposed of all my interest in the SMART SET.—W. D. Mann.

BUT—Please read "Something Personal" on page 176

John Adams Thayer, Boston born and widely known in publishing circles, has purchased outright from the Ess Ess Publishing Company the SMART SET MAGAZINE, which was established in 1900 under the ownership of Col. W. D. Mann.

From the first it has been brilliantly edited and naturally met with the success such work deserves. Mr. Thayer helped build up the *Ladies' Home Journal*, introducing many complete novel features and starting the campaign for clean advertising.

For a time he was associated with *Munsey's Magazine* as business manager, afterward assisting in rehabilitating the *Delineator*. He was with *Everybody's Magazine* when it got its great start, and now, with the unhampered control of the SMART SET in his hands, his admirers all over the country are interested to see what will happen.—*Boston Globe*.

BUT—Please read "Something Personal" on page 176

It needed only a cursory reading of John Adams Thayer's "Astir" to realize that its energetic author could not long remain in Europe away from the hurly-burly of American publishing and advertising enterprise. The very title of his book symbolized his indefatigable spirit, and there is therefore no occasion for surprise in the announcement that he has bought the popular magazine known as the SMART SET, and that he will soon personally assume control over its destinies. With Mr. Thayer at its head, the SMART SET, while it does not lack many present entertaining qualities, will undoubtedly take upon itself a new lease of life.—*Boston Transcript*.

BUT—Please read "Something Personal" on page 176

Victor

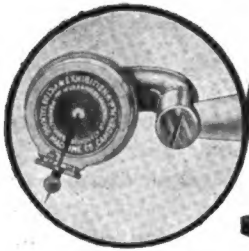


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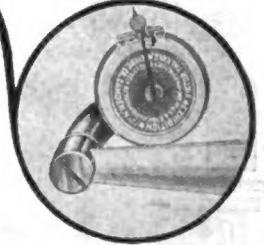
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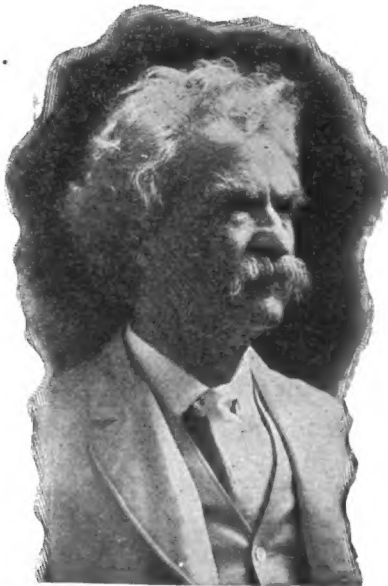
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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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THE MASK OF TRUTH

By KATHARINE METCALF ROOF

THE servant who had admitted them with a sufficiently correct manner stared after them with frowning curiosity as they passed into the drawing-room. The lady—"She called herself a countess," Delia recounted afterwards in the kitchen—had inquired if Mrs. Loring was at home, giving an Italian name that the Irish girl could not reproduce. Indeed, after hearing it she stared uncomprehendingly in the face of the Contessa's perfectly good American English under the impression that she was hearing a foreign tongue. "Tell her her cousin, the Countess Varesca, and the Count." Then meeting the open-mouthed blankness of the girl's face, the Contessa searched for a card.

Count Varesca glanced about the non-committal stiff drawing-room done in flowered brocade and gold. "She seems not to understand your English. Has it then become contaminated in Italy?"

"It wasn't my English but her Irish. The Irish brain works sideways and backward instead of forward. You will find that out if you ask a direction of a policeman."

"Irish." The Count pondered. "I remember; the nationality of your politicians."

The maid returned with a message. "Mrs. Loring says, will you come up to the library?"

They followed her upstairs. After showing them into the more personal room above, Delia returned to the kitchen to report. "She says she's a countess macaroni of some kind or other, but she talks same as you an' me after you get used to her. He looks like an organ

grinder dressed up. An' she says she's Miss Loring's cousin and Miss Loring says to me, 'Wot do you t'ink, Delia,' she says, 'I ain't seen 'er since I was seventeen an' we was children together.' As if I cared w'en she seen her last!"

The room in which the Count and Countess Varesca were waiting was a library in fact as well as name. The walls were surrounded with shelves filled with richly bound books reaching half-way to the ceiling. Above the moldings were hung bits of Parthenon frieze and brown prints, chiefly Madonnas by Raphael, Murillo, Andrea del Sarto, even Guido Reni, the smoother, more conventional masters of the past. There were also some reproductions of Sir Frederick Leighton and Watts.

"This, I imagine, is the author's *milieu*," Nina remarked.

Mario Varesca glanced about. "A gentleman of irreproachable Philistine tastes." Then his eyes rested upon the lower part of a row of shelves closed with a latticed door with something of the amusement of a naughty gamin. "That locked lattice over there, *carissima*, you see—" He rose, crossed the room and tried the knob. "I knew it was locked. When I look at these walls I feel sure that there is a pile of naughty French novels behind that little door."

Nina laughed. "*Cativo*," she said as to a child, "I am ashamed of you. There are some simple good souls in America of a kind undreamed of in your cynical Latin philosophy."

"So you tell me, Ninina, but I don't seem to feel it here."

She glanced about the room—its counterpart could not have been found in Italy. "I begin to realize the years—

To think of little Mildred married to a famous American author!"

"And you to an infamous Italian count," her husband observed, his amused eyes still roving about the room.

"Exactly." Her eyes went from the print of a Murillo Madonna to a framed autographed photograph of a profound gentleman whose face was almost entirely lost in shadow. "Somehow I feel the time that has passed here as I never did in Italy. I should never have known New York." She rose and crossed the room. Her husband's eyes followed her. A woman of intangible quality, she suggested neither race nor type. Subtly and sensitively wrought as the women of the Luini portraits, unhurried in all her movements, she yet conveyed some underlying sense of the clear vitality of the American—which is a thing so different from the vivacity of the Latin. As she spoke an amused unbiting cynicism played as it were over her surface, touching the shadows of her eyelids, the corners of her mouth. This shifting quality of expression about the eyelids and brows gave an indescribable fascination to her eyes which, in spite of illusive suggestions and flashes, did not after all furnish a clue to either thought or feeling. The mouth spoke of impulse, courage, emotion. Yet the accents of decision and experience had restrained and refined the original temperament of youth. On the whole a face potent to move the imagination of the least poetic of men.

Varesca however was an Italian. Nine years of marriage had left him free to enjoy the less subtle charms of other women. But it had not dulled his appreciation of his wife as an art object and valued chattel, envied, admired and desired by other men. There had been moments when this envy and admiration, having reached conspicuous development, the slumbering racial fires of jealousy had been roused within him, but they had subsided quickly with the conviction of his wife's indifference. He had, too, underneath, a sincere and dependent affection for her not unlike that of their youngest son Mario—for Paolo was different. Already he

had perceptions not possessed by his father.

Nina turned from the small Egyptian object—it was only a French imitation. "Mildred—I hear her coming!" She moved toward the door. They met on the threshold.

Mildred Loring clasped her cousin in her arms, then held her at arms' length. For a moment each stared at the other without a word. Mildred spoke first:

"You haven't changed much; I should have known you."

"And you," Nina returned, "haven't changed at all." She turned to her husband. "But poor Mario—he has aged somewhat; he is getting gray. The years of matrimony have told upon him."

The Count bent low over Mildred's hand. "It is not the fault of matrimony if I grow old. But the signora is as when we saw her last at our wedding."

Nina studied her cousin's frank unwritten face affectionately. "You don't even look married. How do you manage that?"

Mildred blushed. "I haven't been married very long, you know—only a year and three months."

Nina laughed and drew a long breath of mock dismay. "And I am an old married woman with two children!"

"Oh, I do so want to see them!" Mildred exclaimed. "Are they with you?" They were seated on the divan now, hand in hand. Mario sat opposite watching them with amusement, for the comradelike friendship of women as it exists in Anglo-Saxon countries is unknown among his countrywomen.

"Paolo is with me. I left Mario with his grandmother and American governess. I think it is bad for small children to travel."

"And are they as beautiful as their pictures?" Mildred asked.

Nina's smile transformed her subtle face. "Don't ask their mother. To me they are so beautiful that I can't believe they are mine."

Varesca smiled. "That, *carissima*, is the explanation."

Mildred regarded him solemnly with her large eyes. "How nice to have a

husband who says things like that! Percy does sometimes, but he says he can never say anything that is not the exact absolute truth."

Mario Varesca cast down his eyes and smiled.

Nina explained. "That is one of the differences between an Italian and an American. Mario may mean the same thing as an American husband when he tells his wife that she looks like the devil in that dress. But it is only when he is angry that he tells me the unflattering truth. I admit I prefer the Italian way myself. But perhaps that is because I am used to it."

Mildred stared a moment. Her cousin's manner and words bewildered her. Something about them did not feel quite right. It was too—light somehow. Nina had not been like that when she left America at fifteen. Mario, considering himself a connoisseur upon feminine beauty like most Latin men, wondered why, with her clear skin, regular features and large eyes, Mildred did not attract him. "She is beautiful, I admit," he said afterwards to his wife, "only somehow one does not care whether she is or not." He looked at his wife and knew that, in spite of the fact that by the Italian's standard she was no longer young—for she was twenty-nine although she looked four years younger—she was more attractive than when a slender girl with eyes that baffled him with their mockeries, their withdrawals, their disconcerting Anglo-Saxon directness, she had taken him the length and breadth of Europe without pausing to inquire the extent of her portion. Complacent as he was in his Latin formula of woman, there were moments still when he wondered if he had sounded the uncertain depths of those eyes.

"It is so lovely to have you here," Mildred exclaimed. Her conscience smote her lest her momentary qualm of disapproval had revealed itself. "I was so surprised when I got your letter. It came yesterday, I think—no, I believe it was the day before, because I remember Percy said that it was too bad I hadn't known in time to meet you, and the boat came in Tuesday, didn't it?

And we went right to the hotel, but you were out."

Nina did not assist these conscientious reminiscences. "We came very suddenly, and had to attend to a little business matter as soon as we landed. I have neglected my affairs over here so long. I should have cabled but I wanted to surprise you."

Mildred studied her cousin frankly. "I think you are prettier—that is, I mean more interesting-looking than ever. Of course I don't mean that you aren't pretty."

Nina laughed and patted her hand. "Don't apologize. I make no pretensions to beauty."

Mario Varesca leaned back negligently regarding her. "They are not necessary. Nina is known to be the most beautiful as well as the most fascinating woman in Italy."

Nina lifted her eyebrows. "Why not include America, since you are making compliments upon the grand scale?"

"I am not competent to speak of the women of America."

"Not yet, dear, but you will be."

Mario pulled deprecatingly at his mustache as if unable to deny his sad doggishness. Mildred looked from one to the other, her lips a trifle apart. She felt as if she were listening to a foreign tongue to which her ear was not accustomed. The same sense of doubt, of potential disapproval, came over her.

"How long are you going to stay?" she asked gravely.

"Probably two or three months," Nina replied, "so we will have plenty of time to bridge over the past years. How did we manage to miss seeing each other for so long?"

Mario rose, divining with his quick Latin perception that Mildred wanted to see his wife alone, and pleaded an errand in the neighborhood in connection with some missing trunks. "Nina has always told me how much better you manage the affair of your luggage over here," he remarked, "but I find you can make mistakes even in America."

"Oh, we are not perfect," Mildred assured him earnestly.

"But can't you telephone? Must you really go?"

The Count laughed, made a gesture and kissed her hand—an act that filled Mildred with an embarrassment touched with elation—bowed low and took his leave, promising to return in a few minutes.

When they were alone Mildred felt more at ease. She took Nina's hand again and held it against her cheek. "Dear Nina—it is so good to see you. You look happy; are you?"

Nina nodded smiling. "Mario is a charming companion, as you see."

"He is the handsomest man I have ever seen."

"He does look rather as if he had stepped down from a Giorgione canvas," Nina agreed.

Mildred looked at her with her large eyes. "And you are just as much in love as ever? What rapturous letters you wrote!"

"What a romantic goose I was then!" Nina's eyes were filled with reminiscent amusement.

Mildred looked shocked. "Do you mean," she asked in a low voice. "that you have been disappointed in your husband?"

Nina turned and patted her cheek. There was no shadow, as Mildred had anticipated, only amusement in her eyes. "I mean that I have been married nine years, Milly. You must remember I spent all my growing-up time in a French school and knew much less of life and men than an American girl brought up at home. I expected to find a hero out of a romantic novel."

Mildred looked troubled. "You don't mean that you"—she paused, her tone dropping to that of one touching tragedy—"that you have lost your ideal of him!"

Nina smiled. "I am devoted to Mario. But I no longer imagine him to be a demigod. I know that he is not faultless."

Mildred Loring smiled ecstatically into space. "Percy is," she said softly.

Nina's eyebrows twisted whimsically. "Rather an alarming description."

Mildred answered solemnly. "He is a

little alarming. I found him so at first. I still do sometimes."

Nina glanced at her cousin's rapt face. "I see that you are very happy. Dear little Mildred! You are so real and you take life so seriously, I couldn't bear to have you anything but happy."

Mildred turned upon her wondering. "Don't you take life seriously, Nina?"

"I am afraid I do sometimes."

Mildred swept her with a somber glance. "If you were as happy as I am you couldn't say bitter cynical things like that!"

Nina laughed. "Do I sound bitter and cynical? I don't feel so. Don't let's talk about me. I am so glad you are happy."

Mildred leaned forward, her large eyes fixed. "*Happy?* I am so happy that sometimes it frightens me! You will understand when you see Percy."

"Tell me about it." Nina spoke softly with a caressing inflection that she might have learned in her adopted country.

Mildred seemed to relive her past as she briefly considered it. "You know I wrote you those long letters at the time—how I had always hated all the men in our set. They never talked about anything but material things. They hadn't ideals—if they had they didn't talk about them. Sometimes it almost seemed to me that they hadn't any souls, if such a thing could be. And mamma was so cross with me because I wouldn't marry that silly Willy Price who was always laughing at everything. She called me an old maid. You know I was twenty-seven when I met Percy. Then one night papa asked him to dinner—I shall never forget it! I had read his 'Home of the Heart' and 'The Silver Cloud' and all the others a dozen times—you know them, of course?"

"I knew his name. I am rather cut off from American books," Nina explained.

"You must take some of Percy's back with you." Mildred returned to her recital. "At first I was terribly afraid of him. He was awfully kind, but every time I looked at him I found his eyes on me. Oh, Nina, it was the most wonderful experience—to have a man really

love you just for your soul. I couldn't believe it when he really told me at the end of the winter and asked me if I would do him the honor to be his wife."

"It doesn't sound very much in the modern American manner," Nina commented.

"There is nothing modern about Percy—in the sense, I mean, that modern things are trivial. He despises anything trivial. He stands to me as the highest type of American gentleman. He says that is his ideal. But he tells me I must not worship him as something he is not. His ideals are so fine and high that they almost frighten me."

Nina pressed the hand she held. "Dear little Mildred, you always were a hero worshiper."

"At last I have found a hero worthy of my worship," Mildred declared.

"I remember you used to take it out on actors and opera singers," Nina recalled. Mildred's face contracted. "Don't remind me of that. Don't mention those men in the same breath with him!" She broke off, listening intently. "I believe that's Percy now." She rose, excusing herself a moment. Nina heard her talking with someone in the hall. In a moment she returned with a radiant face. "It *was* Percy. Isn't it lovely? I was *so* afraid he wouldn't get back before you left. I never know when he is coming. When he gets an idea he just walks and walks until it is 'out,' as he expresses it."

The door opened and Percy Loring entered. Nina, glancing at him, a quick, concentrated glance, saw first that he was not young, that he was tall, stiffly built, slightly bald, with handsome eyes and a small mouth partially covered by a mustache. He moved toward her in a slow, stately manner. All his movements were unhurried.

Mildred fluttered about supplicating him with an adoring glance. "Percy dear, this is Nina, my cousin Nina."

Percy Loring extended his hand. "Have I really at last the privilege of beholding the celebrated Nina?" His voice was rather small and high and he spoke with a marked English accent.

Nina lifted her expressive eyebrows.

"Celebrated! For what? I am almost afraid to ask."

Percy Loring gave her a close glance. "I will tell you some time." His manner was pompously mischievous.

Nina knitted her brows in mock alarm. "How mysterious! What dreadful tales have you been telling of my past, Mildred?"

Percy looked very wise. "It wasn't Mildred. It was Peggy Price—and the Wortley schoolboys that you met one day on Fifth Avenue. Ah, I see you begin to remember!"

Nina smiled. "Could I ever forget? The little blue flannel petticoat I dropped just as they passed. And I tried to stuff it into Peggy's pocket and she wouldn't forgive me for a month. Oh, those tragedies of childhood!"

Percy Loring looked nonplused for a moment; then his manner took on an elation suggestive of the *risqué* story. "Yes-er-a-that was the incident. Nina—I may call you Nina, may I not?"

"Of course; why not?" Nina spoke carelessly. "I always think of you as Percy."

Mildred was giving instructions to Delia, who was bringing in tea. Percy gave a swift glance in her direction, then dropped his voice as he spoke. "Continue to think of me that way."

Nina seemed not to have heard; she was smiling at Mildred, who came up laying an affectionate hand upon her arm. "Tea will be ready in a moment. I hope no one will come." But even as she spoke, the street door below opened and closed again. "May I say I am not at home, Percy, if it is anyone but the Count?" she pleaded.

Percy considered gravely. "To be 'not at home' is an understood fiction of society. You know, dear, I have no objection to your saying that upon occasion, provided it is not mere selfish whim."

"I can't imagine Mildred the victim of a selfish whim," Nina observed.

"Mildred *is* unselfish," her husband recorded gravely. Then Varesca entered smiling. "Was I right to come up unannounced? The maid said to do so."

"Quite right," Mildred assured him

with her pretty invariable smile. "You are at home here"—a statement that brought some faint passing expression to the Count's face. "And just in time for tea." She presented him to her husband, and seating herself at the tea table conscientiously attended the wants of her guests. She noted with surprise that Mario refused tea but ate cakes with the unction of a small boy. Percy Loring watched him coldly, addressing him with studious politeness when he spoke. Mildred watched him, too, with an interest increased by her conversation with Nina, an interest primarily based upon her youthful affection for her cousin, yet Mildred was one of those who assure you earnestly that they enjoy nothing more than "character study." Varesca did not observe them, having made up his mind about them both in his first glance and having no further interest in them. Nina however studied her cousin's husband without seeming to look at him. She noted that his hair—worn rather long for the purpose—was brushed from the side to the crown of his head in the attempt, not altogether successful, to conceal an encroaching baldness. He had altogether an inexplicable effect of belonging to another decade. Although his clothes were conventional and devoid of any obvious affectation he somehow suggested the photographs of the early seventies. His large dark eyes had unquestionably a certain beauty, the self-conscious beauty of a village belle. One seemed to have seen the counterpart in an old daguerreotype.

The conversation with the arrival of the two men had become halting and perfunctory, and had it not been for the light ease of the Countess might have developed an element of discomfort. Varesca soon gave a significant glance at his wife and in response to its message she rose.

"But you must come again tomorrow, Nina dear," Mildred urged her. "You know it is my day."

How young Mildred was! The Countess smiled. "I would rather come when I don't have to divide you up with a crowd."

"It won't be a crowd. I am home Sundays all winter. Don't you want to meet my friends, Nina?"

"Of course I do." She saw that Mildred was hurt. "I will come."

Percy Loring escorted them to the door, where he shook hands with them both, the Count first, very coldly and formally, with Nina last, a lingering pressure and an earnest glance. He returned to his wife and stood at the window thoughtfully caressing his mustache. Mildred hovered about him reverently. Usually she did not question until it was his will to express himself but this time she was unable to restrain herself. "You like Nina, do you not, Percy dear? Don't you think she is dear and sweet?"

"She is very charming," Percy replied with measured approval. "An accomplished woman of the world."

Mildred's face fell. "Oh, do you think she is worldly, Percy? Indeed, she isn't; you are mistaken."

"I didn't say that. I said that she was a woman of the world." Percy's tone was punctilious.

"But you like her?"

"My dear child, I have not had a dozen words with her. But her husband"—Percy Loring's face darkened with dislike—"he is detestable. He must offend any refined taste."

"Why, I thought his manners very charming," Mildred ventured timidly.

"His manners—I wasn't speaking of his manners. I am afraid our cousin has made a very unfortunate choice."

"I think she is fond of him," Mildred protested feebly. "What didn't you like about him?"

"It is easy to see that he is good for nothing, dissipated, worthless—effete." He pushed out his lips irritably at the last word. "You mustn't have anything more to do with him than you're obliged to, Mildred."

And Mildred replied frightened, "No, dear, of course not." But her heart was heavy for Nina.

"What," Nina inquired of her husband as they waited for the taxicab they had hailed to draw up to the curb, "do you think of Mildred's husband?"

Varesca smiled. "That there are naughty books behind the locked lattice!"

This time his wife did not protest. "I shouldn't wonder. Poor, dear little Mildred—and she hasn't grown up a bit."

II

IN response to Mildred's especial request to come early, Nina went alone on Sunday, Varesca having promised to follow later. She found Mildred and her husband in the library.

"Late in the season like this, when there isn't a crowd, we like to have tea up here," Mildred explained. "It is so much cozier although it is such a huge room—and people always like to see the place where Percy works."

"What fun to have you all to ourselves!" Mildred's soft eyes looked all the expressive things that her trite decorous little habits of speech failed to convey. Almost immediately following upon her words came the sound of approaching footsteps, and Percy exclaimed, "Alas, the intruder!"

The maid—it was Delia—preceding their guest, announced, "Miss Worthing," and a slender girl with a thin face and sad eyes, plainly, almost shabbily dressed, stood in the door, then started back in evident embarrassment. Mildred, going forward quickly, greeted her cordially. "Why, Jane dear, what a nice surprise! It is ages since I have seen you."

But her guest looked uncomfortable. "I think the maid has made a mistake. I asked to see Mr. Loring. I only came on business. I supposed that she was showing me into some room where he sees people."

Mildred looked hurt. "This is his library." She gave a perplexed glance at her husband's back. "Did you only want to see him?"

Jane Worthing replied with more composure. "Yes—something quite imperative or I should not have had to come here—about the illustrations for his new book."

Mildred brightened. "Oh, are you

doing them? How nice! Why, he never told me. Sit down just a minute, Jane; you can't be in such an awful hurry. Who do you think that is over there talking with Percy? It's Nina. Now, won't you wait a moment?"

But Jane Worthing again made a movement to withdraw. "Oh, I can't see anyone; I am not dressed. I only came on business."

But Mildred, disregarding her, called out to the other two who were still standing before the bookshelves: "Nina, Percy—here is Jane Worthing." Nina turned quickly, Loring with something more than his usual deliberation.

Nina Varesca came forward instantly and took both of Jane Worthing's hands in hers. "Why, Janie, how lovely to see you again! I should have known you anywhere—the same eyes. Do you still draw pictures on the margins of your books?"

"No," Mildred answered for her; "she draws them *for* the books now. She is an illustrator."

"I so seldom see the American magazines," Nina explained quickly, "so you must pardon my ignorance."

"I am sure there is no reason why anyone should ever have heard of me," Jane Worthing replied. All this time Percy Loring had been, as it were, delaying himself in the background. Mildred's voice drew him forth of necessity.

"Percy, dear, I think you know my old friend Jane Worthing, although I didn't know it. She has come to see about the pictures for 'The White Flower.' I didn't know she was illustrating it. Why didn't you tell me?"

Percy came up slowly, bowing formally and unsmilingly to Jane Worthing. "I don't always mention uninteresting business matters to you, my dear," he replied.

Nina Varesca gave him a glance from her sphinxlike eyes which to Percy Loring only seemed to convey a compliment.

At that moment the maid brought in tea. "Come over here and wait for the first cup of tea, Janie," Mildred urged, "before you begin on your tiresome business."

"No, thank you, Mildred," Jane repeated; "I haven't time, really."

Nina interposed quickly. "Let me pour, Mildred. People will be coming. Jane, you must come over and talk with me." Then as she saw that the other woman still hesitated she added in the tone that few could resist: "You don't want to hurt my feelings, Janie, making me feel that my old friends have forgotten me."

"But you don't understand," Jane hesitated. Percy Loring had drawn his wife aside and they were as if alone.

Nina dropped her light manner. "Sit down and tell me."

Jane sat down. People usually did as Nina told them. But she still protested: "You don't understand. I am out of your world now."

"My old friends are never out of my world, Janie." The tone was not sentimental but it carried something comforting to Jane Worthing's tired spirit.

Meantime Percy Loring was addressing his wife in the tone of the censor. "How did that woman get in here?"

Mildred looked frightened. "Why, Percy, she is an old friend of mine. We were friends at school, she and Nina and I. I have not seen her lately or you would have known."

Percy Loring smiled grimly. "Excellent reason why you have not seen her."

"What do you mean?"

"She is not a proper person for you to know."

Mildred gasped. "You are mistaken, Percy. You have mixed her up with someone else."

Percy Loring bent a stern look upon his wife. "Mildred, do I hear you telling me that I am 'mixed up' about something?"

Mildred apologized. "Forgive me, dear, but anyone can get mixed up about names; don't you think so?"

Percy Loring compressed his small mouth. "Well, there is no mistake in this case—Jane Worthing, the illustrator. I was very much annoyed with Creston for giving her the contract for my book. I would have forbidden it if I had known in time. If you wish to

know what she has done—she eloped with a man who had an insane wife, so that he couldn't marry her—without an expensive divorce which neither of them could afford—so she simply lived with him until he died. That is why you haven't seen her."

"He died?" Mildred repeated awestruck.

"He had consumption."

"How terrible!" Mildred's eyes were large and frightened. "I wouldn't have believed it of Jane. She was always so exquisite and fine. And yet perhaps it wasn't quite so wicked as if he were not dying and she taking care of him—a dying man, Percy—"

"Dying with sin on his soul," Percy Loring retorted sternly.

"But she loved him. She must have suffered."

"She deserved to." Percy Loring pronounced judgment.

Mildred looked up at him adoringly, pleadingly. "Percy dear, you are so strong yourself. You cannot expect everyone to come up to your own high standard."

"Of course not," Percy agreed, "but there are limits"—his tone became severe—"which no pure woman can cross and remain within the pale. I am not at all pleased to hear you taking this woman's part."

"I was not exactly taking her part," Mildred protested, "only—"

But her husband interrupted her. "Don't talk about it any more. It is a most unpleasant subject. I will see her in my smoking room. Only she must not come here again, you must understand that, and you must get her out before any of your other friends come in."

Mildred, looking very much troubled, crossed slowly to the tea table where Jane under the spell of Nina's charm sat interested and smiling.

"Jane, Mr. Loring wants to see you downstairs. He is afraid we won't give him a chance for the business talk in here." Mildred spoke uncomfortably and with evident self-consciousness. She had no skill in dissembling.

Percy Loring came over to speak to Nina.

Jane faced Mildred frankly. "I can imagine what your husband was saying to you just now. That is why I didn't want to come in when I saw you here. I want to remind you that I had no intention of forcing myself upon you, Mildred."

At her last words Mildred's soft heart, her old impulse of friendship, overcame her scruples and even for the moment her awe of Percy Loring. "Don't speak like that, Janie. I have always been so fond of you. I was hurt because you never came to see me any more."

"You understand now, then?"

"Oh, Janie, I am so sorry." Mildred put out her hand impulsively.

Jane's response was calm. "Thank you, Mildred. It is kind of you, for I realize that from your standpoint I am a wicked woman."

Mildred, embarrassed by the other girl's strange manner, by the whole painful problem involved, so shocking to her immature sensibilities, cast an agonized glance in her husband's direction. Seeing him absorbed in conversation with her cousin, with her trained habit of not interrupting or disturbing him she felt obliged to let him choose his own time. She turned to Jane with lowered eyes. "Tell me about the pictures for 'The White Flower,' Janie. I am crazy to know what parts you are going to illustrate."

At that moment Percy Loring, glancing coldly in Jane's direction, observed to Nina: "She should never have been let in—the Worthing woman. It is very embarrassing."

Nina's smile was unrevealing. "She is such a dear. What has she done that is so dreadful?"

Percy Loring glanced at her sideways with a morbid peering expression. "As you seem to have acquired the foreign plainness of speech I suppose I may speak to you as to a man. She has been living openly with a man to whom she was not married."

Nina Varesca glanced at the quiet pale face of her old school friend, noting its somber lines of trouble, its calm decision. "Openly! Courageous at least." Percy Loring stared. His mouth actu-

ally remained ajar an instant. "Courage—is that what you call it?"

"It takes courage certainly—for a woman."

Percy Loring pulled at his mustache. "Contessa, really—"

"Why didn't they marry?"

With an expression of distaste the author explained: "I believe he had an insane wife and couldn't afford a divorce. He was dying of consumption and wasn't able to work."

The sensitive brows of the Countess contracted. "And how did they live?"

The author's reply was contemptuous. "I believe she supported him."

Nina's eyes shone. "A woman alone to stand up against the whole bulwark of society. It is law breaking of course, and terribly lacking in worldly wisdom, but it takes genuine courage and unselfishness."

Percy Loring's tone was cold and pure. "Your adjectives are—singularly chosen, Contessa."

Nina Varesca's eyes swept him. "Is there no distinction in your mind between the selfish and the unselfish disregard of the necessary social law? Or between hypocrisy and facing the storm? Jane is not a stage celebrity immune from the penalty of the social and moral law. She has paid the price."

"Immorality is immorality, Contessa."

"You are a rigid moralist, Mr. Loring."

"I am, Contessa, especially for women."

She smiled faintly. "Like most men."

Percy Loring gazed dreamily into space. "To me woman is something so wonderful, so ineffable, so fine, that the thought of the slightest smirch upon her white wings is torture to me."

"But for men—another standard?"

Percy Loring's air was noble and unflinching. "On the contrary. How dare we hope else to be worthy of the love of white-souled woman? 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.' Woman will always love the highest. It is her nature."

"I seem to recall some exceptions," Nina murmured.

"Ah, but they *were* the exceptions!" Percy Loring's face lighted. His manner was significant as if he had uttered something of deep import.

Nina smiled. "You are fortunate to be able to live up to your ideals. Few of us can or do."

Percy bent a beautiful smile upon her. "We can try!"

She started to move away in the direction of the other two. Percy Loring followed her, his eyes bent upon her with a peculiar expression.

"You seem to have imbibed some Continental ideas in place of our American ideals, Contessa." His tone was reproving but his eyes were gleaming.

"I suppose my Americanism has become somewhat modified."

He looked down into her eyes that were not for his sounding. "You hold some advanced ideas certainly. I do not misunderstand you, but will you permit me to suggest that you should be careful about expressing such opinions generally? People might take you seriously."

"I am quite serious, I assure you."

Percy Loring gave her a long look, his noble expression giving place to one of jaunty naughtiness, evidently, from his swift glances over at the other group, tempered by a fear of observation. "We must have a long talk together," he began, but Nina walking ahead of him had already joined Mildred who was coming toward them.

"Percy," Mildred addressed her husband anxiously, "Jane wants to know if you can see her now. She says it is rather imperative. Something about printers and engravers."

Percy replied with his studied politeness: "Certainly." He addressed Jane for the first time if obliquely. "The smoking den is empty, I believe. I am sure Miss Worthing won't object to a mannish place."

"One is not usually fastidious as to where one holds a business interview," was Jane Worthing's emotionless answer.

The maid appeared at the door an-

nouncing, "Miss Randolph and Mr. Wright."

Miss Randolph, a tall, amply built brunette, with large dark eyes a trifle closely set and a blooming color, greeted Mildred effusively, recognizing Nina in the moment of introduction. "Why, Nina, I declare I haven't seen you since you became a countess." Then she held out her hand to Loring, introduced the young man who accompanied her and passed on apparently not having seen Jane Worthing.

Percy Loring, the smile with which he had greeted Miss Randolph fading, addressed Jane Worthing as an inferior. "This way please, Miss Worthing." He opened the door without looking at her and Jane quickly preceded him out of the room and down the stairs.

"I t'ought she couldn't belong wid de guests," Delia Murphy recounted afterwards in the kitchen. "Look onct at the cloze she had on! How are you goin' to tell anyhow wid de kind of lookin' folks comes to this house every onct in a while? One of 'em wrote a book, Miss Loring tole me, but if they's ladies and gentlemen, w'y don't they dress like it? That's wot I say."

III

FAIRFAX RANDOLPH drew Nina to a sofa. Harold Wright found himself with Mildred Loring. He was a fresh-faced wholesome-looking young man. Something about him, clothes, manner, speech, conveyed the impression that he had been bred farther west than New York. His clear honest eyes regarded Mildred with frank admiration.

"If I could only tell you what I think of your husband's books, Mrs. Loring!" he exclaimed.

Mildred was all eagerness. "Please do tell me! There is nothing I love to talk about so much."

Wright's young eyes became introspective with naïve egoism. "Great stuff, I tell you. Do you know, he has had a tremendous influence on my life!"

Mildred received this intelligence with emotion. "So many people say

that. But they are usually women. You have no idea how many letters Percy gets from them."

"I can believe it. But it isn't just women's stuff—with apologies to your sex; I mean it is the real thing."

Mildred waxed eloquent. "Of course it is. And when the critics say horrid bitter things—they don't often but sometimes they do—and call it old maid's morality, it makes me furious. But Percy says he only feels sorry for them."

"More to be pitied than scorned, eh?" Harold Wright gave a robust young laugh, but Mildred's mood was intense.

"Tell me how he influenced your life!"

The boy met her serious eyes and glanced around the room. "Not now. Some other time when there isn't quite so much tea fight going on. I'll tell you about the time we had coming here. Miss Randolph played such a joke on poor Brent; did she tell you?" Mildred shook her head. "Say, she's a stunner, isn't she? It seems almost a pity."

Mildred glanced at the full blown beauty. "Percy says she sees him with the eyes of her soul," she said.

The boy's honest face held a shade of doubt. "It's a beautiful thought," he said. "I guess he always sees things in a kind of unworldly way, doesn't he?"

Mildred weighed this suggestion intensely as if it were some deep and subtle psychologic hypothesis. "I think he does." Then with expectant earnestness she urged him: "Tell me the joke."

Then Wright told her in his happy-go-lucky slangy fashion how they had given Fairfax Randolph's fiancé "the slip," as he called it, but when he had concluded Mildred's serious eyes were still serious and a little puzzled. After waiting a moment for her laugh he began again. "Why, it was like this, don't you see—" He went over the anecdote, emphasizing and explaining the points, and at the end was rewarded by her pretty light laugh. He was a good-natured lad. Mildred's dark eyes met his with admiration and it never even occurred to him to call her "dense."

On the other side of the room Fairfax Randolph, chatting with Nina, stared with large eyes that looked even larger in her astonishment. "And you mean to say that you would bow to her just the same?"

Nina's tone was light and without emphasis. "Why not? You would bow to the man, wouldn't you?"

"Of co'se. That's different."

"How?"

Fairfax Randolph glanced at her serene companion. It was a look which accented the lack of space between the eyes. "Oh, come now, Nina, don't you put on those airs of European broadness with me. Ah knew you in old U. S. You know why it's different just as well as I do. You just think it's smart to put on that fast foreign tone."

Nina disregarded this personal turn. "I shouldn't dream of cutting Jane Worthing," she said, "even if her motives had been purely selfish. She has paid the price and is paying it every day and hour, poor child. It is always the woman that pays."

"Well, if a woman sins she must expect to pay the price," was Fairfax's irreproachable reply.

"I do not call what Jane has done sinning. Unwise certainly—and from the standpoint of social law and order impossible."

Fairfax Randolph shook her head. "Well, Ah must say you've got funny ideas of morality over there, not to call it wicked when a woman runs off with a man who isn't her husband!"

"It might be, of course. It usually is, because the motive is generally selfish. That is where the wickedness lies—in the selfishness, the sin against someone else—or so it seems to me."

"Bein' married or not is all one, eh?"

Nina smiled. "Well, in my mind morality is not a matter of a ring and a few words in a church."

Fair's eyes seemed to take on a slight cast. "You wouldn't dare to talk like that if you hadn't married a count."

Nina only smiled. Fair regarded her with attention. "Really, while we are on the subject Ah'd like to know what you *would* call wicked."

"Must I give a personally revised list of the seven deadly sins offhand?" Nina laughed. "You are serious? Well, I think it is wicked to live a lie. I think it is wicked for a woman to sell herself to a man she doesn't love, whether she marries him or not—"

Fair's color had risen. "Upon ma word, you have learned plain speakin' over there! Spare ma blushes, Nina."

Nina retorted lightly. "You began it. You took me to task for not cutting Jane Worthing."

IV

PERCY LORING, his business interview over, strolled back to the library where his guests were assembled. Mildred summoned him at once. "Percy dear, won't you come here and meet one of your appreciators, Mr. Harold Wright? He is crazy to know you."

Loring acknowledged the introduction benevolently, his hand upon Wright's shoulder. "My dear boy, it makes me very happy to hear that." But his eyes wandered over the dear boy's shoulder to where the Countess sat talking with Mrs. Montague Smith, a pretty woman with prematurely white hair and a high color, a sentimental lady who encouraged her sensibilities, and was invariably the first to meet new arrivals and celebrities.

"I want him to have a nice talk with you," Mildred urged. Percy smiled absently. "Presently. I will return for that pleasure. I must greet Miss Fair. I haven't had a word with her yet. She is looking very beautiful this afternoon." With an added shade of benevolence in his smile he passed them and went up to Fairfax Randolph.

"He is an Englishman, isn't he?" Wright observed, his eyes following Percy's tall figure with admiration.

"Not really," explained truthful Mildred, "but his mother was a French Canadian. He was born in a small town in Maine but he has spent several years in England."

"Then he has French blood. I suppose that accounts for his courtly manners."

"And his beautiful chivalry toward women," responded Mildred. She felt that Harold Wright was very congenial. But the next moment a defect in these characterizations seemed to disturb her. "Of course those things are Mr. Loring's natural character," she explained. "But there is something particularly charming about the French manner, don't you think? And Percy has that in addition."

"He sure has," the boy agreed cordially.

Percy Loring approached Fair Randolph with an access of the courtly manner just commented upon by his youthful admirer. "Do I see you without the thrice fortunate young man?" Fair, with her eyes upon the door, returned: "I reckon that's he now."

As she spoke a young man entered. His shoulders were narrow and stooping; his face with its swollen features, its look of incomplete intelligence, was almost repulsive.

His beautiful fiancée greeted him serenely. "Oh, there you are, Clary." Then with a slightly raised voice she added: "How did you happen to miss us?" She looked at Wright, who glanced laughingly in her direction just then and winked not too subtly.

"Don't know. I was there," Clarence Brent replied heavily.

Percy Loring greeted his lately arrived guest effusively, but his eyes glanced frequently in the direction of the Contessa. Mrs. Montague Smith entranced still held her captive, her soft fascinated gaze bent upon the Contessa's face. She was a lady addicted to violent enthusiasms, usually for musical celebrities, but the Contessa, as she observed rapturously afterwards to her husband, was an "absolutely new type."

Presently, however, Mildred, who habitually broke up interested conversations under the impression that she was keeping the social current in motion, came up and forcibly withdrew Mrs. Montague Smith, leaving her cousin for the moment alone; and Percy Loring hastened almost precipitately to take possession of the vacant seat beside her. Her eyes were upon Brent. For the moment revulsion was apparent in the

face that so infrequently betrayed her thought.

"Surely that isn't—" she began.

Percy, his eyes intently upon her, answered her unfinished question. "Yes, the prospective bridegroom. A multi-millionaire in his own right. A fine fellow, too. Not personally well favored perhaps, but a fine man. We set too much value upon the surface." As Nina made no response he continued: "And he is winning a noble and beautiful girl, one of the rarest flowers of the garden of the South."

Nina turned her light attention upon Fair a moment. "A painted rose!"

Percy glanced up uncertainly. "Eh?"

"I mean she would be handsomer if she did not make up so much."

Percy smiled and shook his head. "Oh, you pretty women—how you do scratch each other!"

Nina's eyes returned to Clarence Brent. He was smiling at some remark of Fair's, and under the influence of its effect he was quite horrible. "That dreadful man! How *can* she? And you pretend to believe that she loves him?"

Percy's tone was one of simple dignity. "I am sure she honors him."

"Or his dollars possibly."

Percy's manner became gently reproachful. "She honors him for his qualities. It is hardly noble surely to judge a man by his face. It is only upon qualities that real love is founded."

"So you think that Fair loves Mr. Brent's soul?"

Percy's acquiescence was lofty. "I do." Then he caught her smile and shook his head, raising a roguish finger at her. "Ah, you are a confirmed cynic, Contessa."

The Countess shrugged. "I have lived nine married years on the Continent. We are frank about our mercenary marriages in Italy. We are frank about many facts of life and art as you are not here. Nude sculpture does not shock us."

Mildred, passing on her way to greet arriving guests, caught this last remark and gave her cousin a startled glance.

"Mildred is not accustomed to the Continental broadness of speech," Percy

remarked, but his wife having passed out of earshot, he laughed heartily, recalling himself to explain. "I have to protect the plumage of my little white bird, Nina, but you don't shock me—" He leaned more closely in her direction.

"I see no reason why my remark should shock anyone."

Percy Loring did not notice the quality of her tone. He became confidential. "Really at heart, you know, I am thoroughly Continental in my point of view. That is to say—at least—not thoroughly, but I am not so puritanical as you might think."

"I had not thought."

Percy smiled, well pleased. "I am glad you did not think me puritanical. I see we are going to understand each other. We shall get on famously, I see that. The truth is—"

Nina Varesca's light glance rested upon him an instant. "The truth—what is your idea of truth, I wonder?"

Percy was taken aback. "The truth, why-er-the truth is the truth. 'To thine own self be true and it must follow as the night the day—'"

"Being true to yourself then is being true to other people?"

"Ah, you are subtle—you are subtle, I see. You take into account the many moods, the many selves—"

"I am waiting for your definition."

Percy's tone was one of touching simplicity. "I have no epigrammatic definition. I have only my simple, literal, homely old-fashioned ideal of truth."

"The Puritan ideal." Percy nodded, well pleased. "That never made a hypocrite of anyone."

Percy stared, then laughed. "Jove, what a fascinating woman you are!"

Nina made a faint movement of withdrawal. "Your compliments are—unmistakable, Mr. Loring."

He considered her with a sort of ponderous intensity. "Do you prefer them indirect—like the Continental sense of truth?"

"Alas, compliments and the truth are not necessarily synonymous. In compliments our taste is certainly for the indirect."

Percy looked her over. Some inde-

finable accent of expression slanted her eyelids, yet her face was as unrevealing as that of a bronze Buddha. Unob-servant as he was of subtleties, the sense of her elusiveness penetrated him deeply. His eyes clung to her face as he spoke. "Now I am going to ask *you* a question. Will you answer it truthfully?"

"I may not answer it at all."

Percy pursued undaunted. "Does your husband never tell you an un-truth?"

"Your questions are as direct as your compliments."

"You are evasive."

"My husband is a Latin."

Percy Loring threw back his head and laughed. "A clever answer. I wonder how he would like it?"

"Oh, I am not an idealist. Mario knows that. It is the secret of our domestic harmony."

"Then you admit that he might tell you an untruth."

"That depends upon your definition of truth. Anglo-Saxon standards of truth are not in general circulation upon the Continent, as you perhaps know."

He noticed then that she had risen and his features contracted unpleasantly. He rose also slowly. "The discussion interests me. Our American ideals are so different."

"Oh, the American ideals—they are noble and fine. I respect them more than I can say."

Percy's face took on an expression of sophisticated profundity. "But the carrying out you were going to say—"

"I've not been here long enough to generalize." She made a movement as if to leave him; but a group having formed before their corner she waited for an opening. She had imbibed much of the soft leisure of her adopted country. Glancing up at Percy Loring she found his eyes still fastened upon her. Her next remark however caused his expression to change. "I am wondering why, by your standards, you think it a finer thing for a woman to sell herself to a man for his money as Fair Randolph is doing, than for Jane Worthing to take care of a man she loved while he was dying just the same as if it had been

possible for them to have a legal marriage."

"Really, Contessa, you are quite too advanced. Remember you are speaking of a pure and beautiful girl, the daughter of one of the finest families of the South."

"I see."

"How can such a bewitching young woman cherish such revolutionary ideas in her charming head?"

"Really, Mr. Loring, you should translate your compliments into French. They would gain by translation." The blockading group parted and the Countess started to cross the room; the author however followed her.

"I see you are becoming quite denationalized. I must lend you some of my books." He looked down at her.

"I should be so interested." Her response was formal. "Mildred tells me you are a modern master of English."

Percy's irritation vanished in eagerness. "May I bring them tomorrow at tea time?"

Nina walked away as she replied: "Yes, do, if Mildred is free." He slipped away as she joined Mildred at the tea table. An elderly man with a disconcertingly black mustache, who had been chatting with his hostess, withdrew as she approached leaving them alone together. "I think I must go, dear," she said.

"If I had only known," Mildred exclaimed, "that so many people were coming, I would have asked someone to pour. But it is so late—almost March—I didn't think it would be necessary. Oh, Nina, no, you mustn't go yet! Mario said he was coming for you."

"Very likely he has forgotten by this time that I am waiting."

"I thought only literary husbands were like that."

"Apparently there are other ways of passing the time just as absorbing as literature."

Mildred's eyes searched her cousin's face anxiously.

Nina, amused at her *naïveté*, smiled. Mildred, wondering if the smile concealed a heartbreak, dropped a detaining hand upon Nina's arm as Arthur Maddox strolled up to join them. Maddox

was the son of a plumber in a small Western town. From its excellent public school he had gained a certain amount of predigested text-book information on the subjects of art and literature which had served to fire his ambitions. Disdaining thereafter the lucrative profession of his father, he had chosen the career of a journalist, and equipped with certain mental classifications and labels—a qualification that with this peculiarly modern American product passes as culture—he had passed through successive stages of evolution from the paper of his own town to New York by way of Chicago. Some of his cocksureness and effervescent spirits had passed from him in the process, and he had acquired instead certain mannerisms and affectations borrowed from the celebrities and social leaders he had interviewed. At present he was writing comments on the picture exhibitions and called himself an art critic. Through his acquaintance with those artists and literary men who either desired advertisement or good-naturedly and uncritically liked him he received invitations to their receptions. This privilege he enjoyed but he was wistful for association with the excessively and newly rich to whom he had no entrée. He was secretly consumed with joy at the opportunity of meeting a countess, although aside from judging her clothes as more “stylish” he would not have realized her fine thoroughbred quality as essentially different from that of his own sisters. He would have described Emmy and Belle as more “lively,” and would feel occasional twinges of discomfort in the presence of a woman like Nina Varesca, but he would have had no name for the twinge. In America the gentle hallmarks of birth and tradition are as a rule only recognized as such by those who possess them. He stared at the Countess with his round inexpressive eyes, then addressed his hostess: “Didn’t I see Danny Griscom in the hall?”

“Oh, is he back?” exclaimed Mildred. Maddox nodded.

“Dan Griscom!” Nina Varesca exclaimed.

“Oh, yes; you know him, don’t you?” Mildred recalled. “You met him in

Switzerland. I had forgotten. He never speaks of you.”

Nina laughed. “How unflattering!”

Maddox helped himself to salted almonds. “On the contrary, most significant.” He glanced at the tall man standing with an air of infinite leisure in the doorway, shook his head and laughed.

“Curious chap, Danny Griscom, the coolest thing that ever walked Park Row. The man who never gets rattled—that’s what they call him.”

“Percy says he has great poise,” Mildred observed; then, catching Griscom’s eye, she rose, saying hastily: “Will you take the tea table a minute, Nina?” and went to meet Griscom.

Nina Varesca assuming the duties thrust upon her said to Maddox: “How do you like your tea?”

“Two lumps and cream.” Maddox’s attention returned to Griscom. “Looks lazy, doesn’t he? But he isn’t.”

Nina’s eyes rested a fleeting instant upon the subject of discussion. “He looks as if he didn’t waste force.” She held out the cup of tea, and Maddox receiving it exclaimed:

“You’ve hit it! Never wastes a word or a movement—that’s Danny Griscom. He always strolls around like that, they say, whether it is Cuba, China, burning Pelée or what not. He isn’t always on war and foreign correspondent work, you know; he had his turn at being city editor for a time—” Maddox recalled himself. “But you know him—you know all these things.”

“No—no, I don’t know them. Tell me. I never could get him to talk about his work.”

“That’s Danny,” asserted Maddox, who would never have dreamed of addressing Griscom by his Christian name face to face. “Never talks about his work, yet they say it’s the only thing he cares about. He was city editor, time of the Frisco ‘quake—you know he is a Californian, a real one with Spanish blood, born there—that’s where he got his nose, I suppose, and his leisurely air. Then he’s part New England. Funny mix-up, eh? People used to say Danny wasn’t human, until the time of the

'quake. He had all the news to touch up as it came in. He had a mother and a little sister down there—looks after them both I imagine—and for five days he never heard a word from them, but all the time he had to keep busy on his job. There were other California boys on the paper and they all got news one after another, but Danny never heard a word, yet he never turned a hair. No one knew but an old California chum of his. You see, he knew the lay of the land and could make out things that were Greek to the others, and he has a genius for effect and touching things up. We got out the hottest stuff of the lot, thanks to Danny Griscom. Then the fifth day he heard they were safe and he toppled right over in a dead faint like a woman."

"It doesn't sound like a woman," said Nina Varesca.

Maddox went on: "Yes, and he saved two stranded women in the Pelée disaster. I'd like once to see the thing that would faze him! If you could see him in the howling bedlam of a paper making up—smoking and smiling like a villain in a society drama! It's a great sight, I tell you! I suppose that's just the way he looked on top of Pelée when it was smoking."

She smiled and arranged a teacup. He was coming toward them.

V

SHE heard Mildred's voice: "And this is my cousin— Why, I didn't tell you *which* cousin, did I? The Countess Varesca. She says she has met you. Do you remember her?"

Nina put out her hand to Griscom. Their eyes met. "Is it really you?" he said. He spoke as if they were alone. She knew as she met his eyes that he had not seen her until that moment, and that Mildred, innocently self-centered, had not prepared him.

"Then you do remember her," Mildred asserted, her earnest eyes upon them.

Griscom recovered himself then. "Has anyone ever failed to?" he said; and

Maddox wondered if he had imagined that Danny Griscom was on the verge of being "rattled."

Mildred weighing the matter gravely decided that she might venture to leave Griscom with Nina. Percy had always counseled her not to let Griscom get bored. "We want him to come to our afternoons, you know," he once inadvertently confessed, "because he writes for the papers." She turned to the art critic.

"Come, Mr. Maddox, you were so anxious to meet Fair Randolph. She is alone now—"

"I am quite happy here, I assure you," the journalist interposed, loth to leave the Countess and irritated also by Mildred's infelicitous trick of always turning the possibly flattering implication away from the one she addressed.

But Mildred was firm. She had decided—surprisingly, for she was not divining—that she could please Griscom by leaving him alone with Nina and could thus accomplish the end and aim of her existence—win Percy's approval.

"I think they want us to leave them to reminiscences," she remarked gaily, innocent as usual of *gaucherie*, and disregarding Nina's quick, "Don't desert us—we want an audience," passed on conscious of being the perfect hostess.

So they were left alone. Nina Varesca glanced up an instant as she said, "Can't I give you some tea?" She was aware of his eyes upon her.

"You haven't changed at all," he said.

"Is it three years or four? The ravages of time should not have made me absolutely unrecognizable. You wouldn't answer, so I am making your tea—anyway."

"I beg your pardon—"

She handed him his cup. "Lemon and no sugar—unless your taste has changed."

"You remembered—" She saw that the hand that took the cup was not quite steady.

"Yes—Italian men always take so much sugar." He stared into his teacup, not drinking. She went on: "You

all make me feel that time has been standing still. I find Mildred still in her teens. You know I lived in her home when I was a child after my mother died. You've no idea what a strange feeling it gives me, when I have lived such a different life so long, to come back and find her just the same."

He watched her as she talked but looked away as their eyes met.

"Yes, Mildred has not changed, except that she is happier since her marriage. It is because she has the heart of a child. America does that. Our country is an Eden without a serpent for girls and women."

The Countess smiled. "Do I look as if the serpent had been whispering in my ear?"

"Ah, you—you are different."

"Yes, I haven't the heart of a child. I am an old married woman, frightfully sophisticated and worldly wise, I am afraid."

"You are a citizen of the world and unspotted by it."

"I seem at least to be proving the masculine theory that women are never happy unless they have made the conversation personal."

"I imagine your difficulty lies in keeping it impersonal."

She wondered an instant what was going on under the surface play of his mind as she answered: "That is the reason meeting you was such a new experience. I had seen almost nothing but Italian men who are always personal. You were the first who would talk about things with me."

"It wasn't always easy."

"Was I so deficient in understanding?"

He glanced at her and smiled. "I should say it was peculiarly your characteristic to understand, no matter how much one boggled what he was trying to say."

"Mr. Loring would have called me 'The Woman Who Understands.' I have never read one of his books but I know that sentence is in them."

"Does my style suggest his? You flatter me."

She gave him an amused glance that

met his an instant, then again a silence fell between them. He spoke first.

"To see you again after our parting on the heights—I had hardly expected it. I haven't grasped it yet."

"Is it an anti-climax? Life usually is. We are neither of us to blame in any case. We didn't plan it."

He stared into the crowd. "To part on the heights and meet in the valleys—does that sound like Percy Loring?"

"It sounds like—disillusion."

"No," he contradicted her quickly. "But that week in the stillness was an hour away from time and the world."

"How wonderful it was—that stillness! Those moments away from time, as you call them, are the ones that stand out like white sign posts along the way. We look back to them, remember them, wish all of life could be like them, and yet—probably would not have it so if we could."

Her tone quite removed her words from the realm of intimate experience to that of abstract philosophizing. It was a moment before he found an answer.

"I don't philosophize much about life, I am afraid. I am a practical workaday American."

"Are you so practical? I didn't seem to feel it then."

Griscom looked straight ahead of him. "That was a strange new Danny Griscom you brought into life up there, just as your Paolo creates his imaginary play-fellows."

"Did you leave him on an Alpine hillside?"

He shook his head. "No, I brought him with me but he doesn't thrive in the valleys. Sometimes we have a little chat, he and I, and remember things."

"Then perhaps some day he will come and talk with me."

He looked down at her. Some change came into his face and she went on quickly without giving him a chance to answer. "Paolo often speaks of you—my Paolo that you gave back to me—" Her brows contracted at the recollection of the averted tragedy.

He smiled for the first time. "Little

Paolo, the fairy prince! How I wish I might see him again."

"You can; he is with us."

At that moment Varesca entered the room and stopped a few paces from them, looking about him. "There is my husband," said Nina; "he has come to take me away, but first I want you to meet each other."

Griscom turned and glanced in the direction in which she looked. "Your husband!" he repeated in a changed voice.

Just then the Count caught sight of his wife, smiled and made his way toward them.

"Mario, this is my friend Mr. Griscom, the American who saved Paolo from drowning in Lake Geneva that summer you deserted us."

Varesca extended his hand with swift cordiality. "The hero who saved our Paolo's life—then he is my friend also."

Griscom was not at ease. "It was nothing—the obvious thing. Anyone else would have done the same."

"I am afraid it isn't always the obvious thing to risk one's life to save someone else," said Nina.

"Alas, no!" exclaimed the Italian with dramatic enthusiasm. "May I remain, or do I intrude?"

"You are becoming Americanized, Mario, sitting down to talk with your wife."

"I am but frankly selfish. I look always for the most charming woman present."

His wife laughed. "This flattery is suspicious. You can stay a little while; then you must go talk to Mildred."

Mrs. Montague Smith emerged from the crowd at that moment, and discovering Griscom greeted him rapturously. Some people moving into the other room passed between, separating them from the other two.

"You don't appreciate Mildred," Nina said to her husband. She saw that Griscom permitted himself to be detained.

"She is a Donatello Madonna. But she is alarming. She looks at you with her great eyes and always says what she means. I like smiling women."

"Well, there is Fair Randolph, that handsome dark girl. You can't deny that she is smiling."

Mario made a grimace. "I do not demand that she shall smile all the time."

Griscom came toward them, Mrs. Montague Smith lingering in expectant radiance at his side. "Mrs. Montague Smith has flattered me into believing myself an expert upon Chinese curios on the slender basis of my Port Arthur experience. We are going to pass upon a recent purchase of Mr. Loring's. May I hope to find you when I return?"

Mario bowed profoundly. "We shall hope." The Countess nodded, smiling. Her husband sank with a sigh of content into a chair by her side and regarded her approvingly. "You are most alluring in that gown, *carissima*."

"Mario dear, even if you are bored with American parties you mustn't cling to me in this fashion. You are too absurd. I can't have you doing it. Americans are not barbarians. You must be nice to Mildred."

The Count's pantomime expressed sublime resignation. "*Subito*. But leave me to enjoy the sight of you an instant. I have scarcely seen you since we have been in this hideous country of yours. Truly you are altogether charming. I see no one here I like half so well. *Ma!* I may be inconstant but I shall always return to you."

"Mario, don't be so brutally frank! The quality I have always appreciated most in you is your artistic reserve."

The Italian looked at her a little curiously. "Yet I remember when we were first married several rather violent little scenes about the truth."

"That was before I became acclimated. Now I spare you the necessity of deceit."

"Do you know that I have loved you longer than I had supposed I could care for any woman, and in a different way?"

She glanced up into his face which had become suddenly serious, reflecting his emotion quickly as the Latin face does. "Heavens, Mario, are you ill?"

"I have been thinking. I trust you absolutely, but if you should ever care for another man I would kill him."

Nina laughed. "Why him, poor man? Why not me?"

"Don't laugh." His voice shook. The storm of the South had gathered quickly.

Nina's voice took on its caressing accent. "You absurd child. The concealed weapon is there, is it?"

"It is there."

"It is against the law in my country."

"Such things have to do with but one law."

She shook her head at him laughing as at a naughty child lightly reproved. "In spite of Paris, London, Vienna, New York, a Meridionale at heart!"

Under the influence of her lightness he recovered quickly. "A Meridionale at heart."

Mildred came up with Griscom and addressed herself to Mario. "Can I drag you away from Nina's side? Fair Randolph, that stunning-looking girl over there, is dying to meet you. I know Mr. Griscom and Nina aren't half talked out."

The Count arose with a well simulated air of alacrity and was triumphantly borne off by his hostess. "I told Mildred I couldn't lose my first chance to meet a real live count," they heard Fair's animated tones.

Griscom turned to Nina. "There is a sun room at the end of the hall."

"We are going in two minutes."

"Spend them there then."

She followed him to the small glass room where the atmosphere of flowers, birds and aquarium was soothing. He found a green seat among the vines in his direct unhurried manner. "This is better," he said. They sat down. "Escape is necessary as a matter of self-protection. Dear little Mildred does accumulate a surprising number of bores at her afternoons somehow."

Nina Varesca leaned back among the vines. A tiny fountain plashed in a Japanese garden. A cape jessamine swung a flower near her hair. She drew it toward her and smelled it. Then she found his eyes upon her. "You look severe," she said. "I was led to suppose that you were always leisurely and smiling."

"What a horrible picture!"

"What were you thinking?"

He hesitated. "Of your husband."

"He is a delightful boy," she said.

"I am so glad you have met each other. Mario is not much of a reader or a thinker. But somehow he possesses art without acquiring it as others do information. Italians are often like that."

Something about her light affectionate characterization seemed to affect him. He shifted his position, shading his face with his hand as if with some impulse to conceal its revelations.

"Your husband is rather a surprise," he said.

"You didn't think he was so nice?"

"I think I had misinterpreted the situation. I had supposed it to be the ordinary international marriage."

"You mean that you had not imagined it to be what is known as a love match." He nodded. "Unchivalrous person! I am sure I never gave you any such impression. I don't think we spoke much of Mario."

"Perhaps that was it."

"I don't remember that we said much anyway. We sort of thought into each other's minds." Nothing could have been lighter than her manner of saying it. "It was somehow too silent up there to say much."

He moved again. His hand gripped the back of the green seat tightly. "You are in love with him?" he said abruptly.

She started ever so slightly. "If that is a question," she said at length, "it is rather an extraordinary one." She took note of his agitation and went on easily: "That is to say, conventionally considered. Yet how foolish we are about such things! More marriages are made without love than with it, and we often cordially detest the members of our own families, yet it is an unwritten law not to admit it. Of course nothing is more natural than that you should suppose Mario and I had contracted an ordinary businesslike international match."

"But it wasn't—"

"It—wasn't. I hadn't any money—at least not any worth mentioning—while he was rich, for an Italian. I thought he was Romeo and Paolo and

Abelard in one, and he was threatening twice a day to blow his brains out if I wouldn't marry him."

There was a long silence. He was bending forward now, his hands clasped between his knees, his gaze bent upon the floor. "Forgive my bad manners," he said at last. "It was just that I hadn't realized—until I saw you together just now. I knew you belonged to a mortal prince"—his tone had become more natural—"but you see, to me you have always been a sort of being from the clouds with an elfin child—you both used to dress in white, do you remember? I thought of you still there with Mont Blanc in the distance. It is difficult to adjust myself to this meeting on another plane so to speak."

She rose with her fleeting smile. "Disillusionment in the valleys?"

"No, never disillusionment."

"Never! You say it as confidently as an Italian."

"There are a few things in this world that one feels reasonably confident about." He followed her back to the library. At the door she turned. "When are you coming to see us?"

"I hardly know. I am going to Turkey for the paper."

"To Turkey! You casual person! Why didn't you say so before? To be gone long?"

"That is as Allah and the paper will."

"When do you go?"

"I don't know. They just made me the offer today."

"But I will see you again before you go." He hesitated. "Promise"—she spoke lightly. Their eyes met. Something rushed over his face, swift, uncontrollable—a look that stabbed her with some keen shock, whether of pain or joy she hardly knew. Then he turned with his deliberate movement. "I promise," he said. She stood a moment, where he had left her, then joined the group on the outside of which her husband stood bored and smiling.

Harold Wright and Fair Randolph were making their adieus. "I just thought I'd have to see you-all once before I took the white veil, as Harry Wright calls it. I will him to you,

Milly. He hasn't any use for me since he set eyes on you."

"I say now, you deserted me!" the boy protested.

"Watch out, Harry, or you'll be puttin' your foot in it," she returned gaily. But Mildred replied earnestly: "Oh, I don't blame him if he would rather talk to you, Fair, you are always so gay."

Harold Wright's color rose. "But I wouldn't—oh, I say, you girls know what I mean."

"I don't believe you know yourself," said Fair. "Anyway, I'm going, and you ought to be. Good-bye, all. Next time you see me I'll be a blushin' bride." And so she went off with her "groom-to-be" as she called him in tow.

Fair Randolph always uttered her banalities as if they were the most piquant epigrams.

Harold Wright lingered. "I haven't had my talk with Mr. Loring yet."

"Oh, you must wait," Mildred cried. "There he is now. Percy dear," she addressed her husband as he came up, "what became of you?"

"Why, I took Brent off for a little smoke. A fine young fellow that! An appreciative listener, a rare thing in these days."

"Not difficult for you to find, I am sure, sir," said Harold Wright.

Percy looked pleased. "Eh, well—I don't know about that. The scholar and the *littérateur* are none too popular in these commercial days." He became distracted. "Ah, the Contessa is leaving." He turned to Nina, who was making her adieus to Mildred. "Don't go. Now our numbers are reduced, we can have a cozy little chat."

"If we only could!" Nina spoke with her Italian habit of flattering speech and manner. "Another time." She left Percy Loring with a gratified smile hovering about his lips and a lurking roguishness in his eyes.

"I trust," Mario remarked blandly as they drove away, "that all great American authors are not like this old woman our cousin has married."

"He is not a great author but a popular one," Nina defined. Then she

added: "I am not so sure about his being an old woman."

To which Mario rejoined comfortably: "Of course, my dear, a woman is the best judge of that."

VI

"Do you mean to say," Mildred spoke slowly and with a flushed cheek, "that you don't *mind* having Mario flirt with other women?"

"If I did I should be a very unhappy woman."

The two women were sitting in Mildred's boudoir, a rose-hued bower with walls covered with Madonnas and infant Johns. Percy, as Mildred had explained with hushed breath upon her cousin's arrival, was being interviewed in the library.

Mildred dropped her work in her lap; it was a blouse she was elaborately embroidering. "It would kill me! Of course I couldn't imagine such a thing in connection with Percy. He is too high-minded—but I simply could not live if such a thing came to me."

"Oh, yes, you could. It is surprising how much one can live through, and how pale and mild past tragedies seem when you look back on them."

Mildred gave her an unsmiling look. "I shouldn't like them to seem like that." She resumed her sewing.

Nina smiled. "That shows how young you are, Milly dear. It is only in youth that our tragedies are precious to us."

Mildred did not answer. Her manner of sewing seemed almost disciplinary. Nina watched her half smiling.

"Dear child, why do you put your eyes out with that fine embroidery? You can afford to buy all the pretty blouses you want."

"Percy likes to see me sewing," Mildred replied austerely. "He says he would love to think that I made all my own things. You have no idea what intimate sacred sort of ideas he has about women."

Nina murmured something vague and rose. "I must go. It is lunch time."

Mildred folded her work neatly and

rose. "Won't you stay to lunch, Nina?" The invitation had a perfunctory sound.

Certainly, Nina reflected, Mildred's manner toward her had changed, since the first days of her arrival.

"Thanks, no. Jane is to lunch with me. After that we go to her studio. She is making the most adorable sketch of Paolo in red charcoal."

"It is your affair, Nina, but don't you think a woman in your conspicuous position makes a mistake in so publicly making a friend of a *declassée* woman like Jane Worthing?"

"That is hardly a name I should apply to Jane. If it were one of your fast—fashionable young women now— No, Milly dear, I don't think association with poor tragic little Jane is going to misrepresent me. And if it were it wouldn't make any difference to me."

"As you choose. Your life is your own affair, Nina, and your ways are different from mine."

"Down underneath I don't believe we are so very different in our feeling about the essentials, Milly dear."

But Mildred turned aside. "I think we are," she said.

An hour later, at ease in Jane Worthing's studio, the sight of an illustration for Percy Loring's new book was the cause of a conversation between them on the subject.

"Will you kindly explain," Nina said, "why Percy Loring's books should be popular? I hear their sale is enormous."

Jane put a touch upon her sketch and leaned back to regard it. "Because they formulate for the bromide majority all the things that they have thought and are able to appreciate somewhat more coherently and incisively than they could express them themselves. They have the morality of cheap melodrama and are weltering with sentimentality."

Jane leaned back. "You can rest now, Paolo."

"Dearest mother, may I go to see the parrot of Señor Mendez?" pleaded Paolo. "He invited me."

"Yes, if you don't stay too long," and the child ran off to the studio of the Spanish artist on the floor below.

When they were alone Nina said: "I

don't know just what to make of Mildred. I can't seem to get near her somehow."

Jane smiled. "She isn't precisely your kind, is she?"

"So many people are not, yet one gets on with them comfortably."

"Mildred is very serious and rather insists upon things," Jane suggested after a moment.

Nina went on while Jane worked here and there with carefully considered touches. "Mildred seems to me curiously lacking in sophistication, *savoir faire*, when you consider her traditions. Is that typical of Americans? It doesn't seem so of those I have met, but I haven't accepted any of my invitations here yet. Of course I was not at an analytical stage when I went away."

Jane Worthing shook her head. "No, indeed, I think American women of the best type are essentially tactful, graceful. I have often wondered about that in Mildred myself. I think it is because she is naturally literal and very genuine and reacted against her mother's worldliness."

Nina, interested to find intelligent interpretation and response, continued: "I can't understand that marriage anyway. I suppose Percy Loring is in love with her in some fashion—although it is difficult to imagine him possessed by any real feeling—for apparently there was no worldly advantage to be gained on either side, was there? She had money but he seems to be making it."

"Well"—Jane hunted for her eraser which had rolled off to mysterious regions after the manner of such objects—"there was some social advantage for Percy Loring. His antecedents were of the most simple and unadorned."

"Do those things count any more in New York?"

"Lines of breeding and tradition seem to be almost obliterated in New York, I must say," Jane admitted. "America is changing rapidly. The purely artistic circles are made up of hybrids, as any circle must be when the basis is individual instead of traditional. Someone said the other day that the only people that care about traditions are those that have

them. In this generation they are apparently being absorbed into other classes through need of money or the desire for it. Money getting seems to be the American ideal now. There is a smaller circle of the old New Yorkers and a conventional artistic and literary group, not all of them the men and women with the most striking talents perhaps, but made up of people who are at home in a drawing-room. The manners of the other artistic crowd are pretty bad. From time to time they rise, or try to rise to other circles—like Maddox. But I imagine Percy Loring is the type of man who suffered intensely in his youth from class bitterness, and it no doubt gratified him to be able to marry a wife who is a Colonial Dame, even though the poor child presides at her dinners more in the manner of the village schoolmistress." Jane laid down her implements and squinted at the sketch from a distance, then taking a seat on the divan beside her friend relaxed among the cushions. "I hope I don't sound terribly catty about little Mildred, for I respect her tremendously. I just happened to remember some peculiarly bleak social occasions at her house at which I assisted—before I set myself outside the pale."

"Of course we are talking confidentially and in a way impersonally," Nina responded. "I am naturally alert to the differences here. They are so many and so contradictory. Mario's sister, for example, hasn't an idea in her head, but I can spend hours with her happily, while Mildred, who has much more intelligence and information I suppose, seems so curiously unwieldy. Yet there is nobody in Italy I can talk to as I do with you and Mr. Griscom."

Her eyes wandered to the sketch of Paolo. "I wonder what I should have been like if mother hadn't wanted me sent to a French school? It changed the whole current of my life, of course."

Jane Worthing's mouth twisted whimsically. "You wouldn't have been like Mildred Loring."

"Mother loved France so," Nina recalled. "I remember how she used to talk about it. She either idealized it or

it has changed since then." Then her thoughts returned to the distinguished author. "Is Percy Loring a usual type in America?"

"No, I don't think so. Dear me, I hope not! I dare say it is a case of the vices of our virtues. I suppose he would not pose as a matinee girl hero if he were a European, would he? He would not have the same standard to simulate."

"Certainly not if he were a Latin," Nina agreed. "Of course no Continental—not even Germans—have the Anglo-Saxon standard of truth or the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward woman. I feel the air so much clearer over here in those ways. Distrust, untruth, seem to be individual qualities rather than racial."

"Percy Loring," Jane defined, "represents the effect of our standard upon the weak man desirous of approval."

"The result in the case of the individual is certainly more unpleasant than the gay, frank young materialist who does not commit himself to an impractical standard," Nina reflected.

She leaned back and clasped her hands behind her head; an intense light burned for a moment in her eyes. "But there is something in the air here; it gets into one's blood. Do you know, since I have been back it makes our life seem so futile, selfish, drifting. Sometimes it has almost made me wish that my boys might be brought up Americans. But of course that isn't possible." Her hands dropped. She folded them in her lap, looking down at them.

"A curious thing," she said after a moment, "life—our lives—the way things have gone with us—you and Fair and Milly and me. Fair's marriage—" she laughed. "Beauty is going to marry the beast, and will no doubt live happily ever after. I don't think she is oppressed by ideals. I suppose we liked her for her spirits in the old days. You, Janie, at least have proved yourself in the fire."

Jane glanced up. "I? Not yet. It has only just begun. It was easy enough when I had him."

Nina felt the scar that could not be

healed. "After all, you have your work," was all she could find to say.

"Yes, I have my work," Jane repeated quietly. "But I don't care anything about it." A fire flashed up in her quiet eyes.

"Don't say that, Janie."

"But it is true."

"As for Mario and me," Nina went on after a moment, "we are not on a very ideal basis, I am afraid; but it is at least honest and one that pretty well precludes tragedy."

"It was a love match, Mildred told me at the time," Jane ventured on the strength of her friend's frankness.

"What passes for love with immaturity whether of age or spirit."

"But you are happy—"

"Oh, yes. He is a dear child. Once I thought him a young Siegfried of the South. I had all the innocent idealism of the young girl yet, when I was growing up. I was thrown with French girls, who, as you know, think and talk of nothing but marriage. So I suppose I was more alert on the man question—at least in a more conscious way—than the average American girl. Then after I left school, when I was traveling with Aunt Maud and Milly, I met Mario. I was nineteen. His wild picturesque love making turned my world upside down. He was insane about me for about four months after our marriage; then I saw him driving with an actress when he had told me he was in Milan on business. I thought it had killed me, but I lived to recover in a very few weeks. I made no scene, from the Italian standpoint—it not happening to be my nature to run to words when I am hurt. I simply withdrew from him and treated him with courtesy. There were other men who were amiable enough to admire me, and Mario was soon beside himself with jealousy. We made up. I was too young to take an attitude. Perhaps he had not a firm enough hold upon my ideals—I seem to be talking like Percy Loring—to have really shaken me to the depths.

"Anyway, early youth is not the time of real tragedy. His mother noticed and had a frank talk with me. Well,

shocking as it may seem to you, I took the attitude of the Continental wife and accepted the situation. The next time Mario's fancy turned in other directions the blow did not fall so hard. The third time it hardly gave me a twinge. So we went on until three years ago I had my first chance to know an American man well. It was then that I began to realize Mario as the child that will never grow up. I can see how different the whole nation—my country—is from his in such things, and what the marriage situation might be with a grown man for one's husband.

"Yet Mario's love was an interesting experience. It was not the crude affair I may have made it sound. Italians are artists in love making—full of a certain kind of imagination and poetry. Their skies, their sunshine, their fragrant flowers and their fragrant music all weave into it. It is the love of pagan youth; and after all, what does it all come to in the end? We are here that the race may be continued—to what purpose God knows. I am too old now for love and love making. I am the mother of two angel boys, and perhaps I would not have felt any wider experience of life in the love of a man of my own people, whose love is made up of more real elements when it is real. The perfect experience must be rare enough even here."

"I suppose it is the rarest thing in the world," said Jane Worthing.

"I have only seen him once—your husband." Jane spoke after another silence. "But I thought he looked at you as if you were the only woman in the world."

"He feels that way sometimes."

"Isn't he still jealous then? I had always imagined that would be one drawback to the Latin husband."

"Oh, yes; at rare intervals he flares up. But Italians are essentially comfort loving. They usually travel along the line of least resistance. If an emotion offends you, pluck it out and cast it from you—that is their philosophy. If trouble comes—*bisogna rassegnarsi*."

"What might that mean?"

"One must resign oneself."

"Italians are not usually represented that way, and I must say he doesn't look like it."

"Well, Mario has a touch of Meridionale."

"Translate again, please."

"That is what they call Italians who come from the country south of Rome. Mario's mother came from the South, and the Southern Italians are supposed to be a little more volcanic."

"I see."

For a moment Jane worked here and there upon the sketch, leaning back to squint at it critically, then glanced from the portrait to the child's mother. "His resemblance to you is so illusive." Her eyes remained upon the other woman's face with a scrutiny half technical, half personal.

"A penny for your thoughts," said Nina Varesca.

"I was wondering if you were quite sincere when you spoke of yourself as past the time for love and love making."

"I am an old married woman with no taste for intrigues."

"From our standpoint you are at your most dangerous stage."

"Dangerous for myself?" Nina laughed.

"Both for yourself and to men. I can see—as some women perhaps could not—the power you have to take hold of a man's imagination."

"Most men haven't any—at least, American business men don't seem to be overburdened with it."

"Most men have imagination where a woman is concerned. You see, you suggest the ability to care tremendously, while you remain inaccessible and detached, yet there would always be the hope of drawing a spark from you. That is where your power to work upon the imagination comes in."

"I think," Nina remarked, "that you are only giving me a sample of your own."

Then the door opened and Paolo flew in tumultuously but lightly, his exquisite little face alight, in his hand a slender green feather. "See, mother, what Señor Mendez has given me!"

Nina examined it with sympathetic

rapture. It was one of the paroquet's feathers. She put it through the fold of ribbon on the child's white hat. "*Ecco non è bello?*" she exclaimed, and the child again impelled himself into her arms. It was his way; all joy to him was part of his love for his mother; she was his universe.

Nina gathered the child into a close embrace, her face transformed, simplified, into a radiant passion of motherhood. "Oh, if I could get that, you modern Madonna!" cried Jane in professional rapture.

Nina looked up. "What more could I ask of any man in this world than to have given me this?" she said.

"For some women certainly it is enough," Jane reflected.

"I am that kind." Nina released her child with a kiss.

"I wonder?" thought Jane Worthing. "He is the one whose life Dan Griscom saved, is he not?" she asked.

Nina nodded. "You know him rather well, don't you—Dan Griscom? Don't you like him?"

"Like him!" Jane smiled significantly. "That doesn't quite describe my feeling for Dan Griscom. I love him! He has the sensitive kindness of a woman with the strength of a man and the most exquisite real practical chivalry for all women. Shall I tell you what he did once for me?" Nina nodded. "It was not long after Jack died, and things weren't any too easy for me about my work in any way—quite aside from the personal side. I got a chance to do some fashion drawings for his paper—that was when he was city editor. I think he got me the chance, though he always denied it. He always sent the boy up for my stuff so that I never had to go down to the office. One day I tried to give the errand boy something and he said: 'That's all right. The chief squared it with me. He said I was never to take anything from you, and that I was always to come for your stuff.' 'Why,' I said, 'do you mean it isn't usual to send for material from your contributors?' I had never worked for a newspaper before. 'Not on your life!' he said. 'Mr. Griscom sends me special

to you, only maybe he wouldn't want me to tell.' That to me," Jane concluded, "at a time that I was—well, not in the way to receive any too much respect from people. That is the kind of man Dan Griscom is."

Nina was silent for some moments, then she leaned over and took her friend's hand. "Poor little Janie!" she said.

"But don't you think it was wonderful of him?" Jane asked.

"Yes, but it is what I would have expected of him," Nina answered.

Paolo, playing by himself in the corner with a lay figure, caught Griscom's name.

"I wish Mr. Griscom would come and see me," he said plaintively.

Nina smiled. "I tell you what we'll do: you shall write a letter inviting him to tea some afternoon, all in English. That will surely fetch him."

Then Paolo was radiant. She watched him with a tender foreboding. "Paolo will always expect so much more of life than it can give," she said.

"But he will have the joy of his vision," said Jane Worthing, "the joy that no man taketh from you."

VII

Soon after Nina reached home that afternoon her Italian maid Assunta brought back the information from the telephone that Signor Loring was calling.

"Signor—it must be Signora," Nina questioned her.

Assunta insisted that the hotel clerk had said "Meester."

Nina decided that the Italian girl had not understood. It was either Mildred alone or Mildred and Percy together. Perhaps she had imagined Mildred's coldness. "Say that I am at home," she said.

A moment later Percy Loring, looming tall in the doorway, was admitted by Assunta. Nina looked behind him. "And Mildred?" she said.

Percy deposited his hat carefully, preserving a package in his immaculately

gloved hands. "Mildred—why, little Mildred was not at home when I left. Don't reproach me for coming without her, Contessa; are we not cousins?"

Without passing upon the tender question of relationship, Nina replied: "She has not been here in so long. But I dropped in to see her this morning. No doubt she had enough of me."

Percy's smile was chilly. "Pray do not continue this cold reception, Contessa. See what I have brought you." He put a heavy package neatly wrapped in her hands with a low, stiff, self-conscious bow.

She untied the string to find three of Percy's books handsomely bound, inscribed inside in a careful cramped writing: "To my cousin the Contessa Nina Varesca, from her sincere appreciator, Percy Chatfield Loring."

"How interesting!" she murmured. "I have been looking forward to this pleasure."

Percy's face glowed. He sat slightly forward upon his chair, both gloved hands crossed upon his cane. His pose suggested that the chair was not comfortable. He surveyed his hostess in her soft gown of shimmering silk of an uncertain green; its slightly décolleté neck was finished with a collar of old Italian lace. "I appreciate the interior effect," he remarked.

She glanced about the room. "It is not bad for a hotel. The American hotels must be a revelation to a European."

"I referred to the lady. This is the first time I have seen you in costume"—he made a vague, stiff gesture—"without a hat."

"A fact surely that should go upon record." She turned the pages of a book. "'The Silver Cloud'—a novel, I suppose."

"You like the name?" Percy Loring's eyes seemed bent upon probing through all disguise to the truth.

"Very much."

The author's gaze became fixed, introspective. "It is symbolic. You understand that. We have all heard of the 'silver lining'—but the ability of the rare soul to see that the very cloud

itself is silver—" He paused, giving time for the idea to sink in. "You catch my meaning— It is subtle, yet I dare hope it will carry."

The Countess lifted the different volumes, glancing at the titles. "Are they all novels?"

Percy's expression became profound. "Yes. My most recent output—but not so very recent. They call me the lapidary; I carve so finely and slowly. And this last year I have not worked so much. Matrimony is an absorbing occupation."

Nina smiled. "You call it an occupation?"

"Nay, rather a sacred service." There was a pause. "What would you call it?"

"A profession?" she suggested.

Percy Loring's eyes were upon her with the expression that angered her. "Ah, most fascinating of women, you had thought that epigram out before! It was never spontaneous. Who said it first?"

"Do I seem incapable of original utterance?"

Percy Loring's slow skeptical side movement of the head indicated reluctance to contradict. Facility, quick repartee of any sort, irritated his vanity, his own mind working slowly and in grooves.

"How would you classify your own matrimonial venture in epigram? As an episode, I suppose."

Convinced of the brilliancy and originality of his phrase, the author's good humor seemed to return for a moment, but at her reply his expression changed.

"In my own case—oh, Mario and I are too full of *bourgeois* content to make epigrams about ourselves."

Percy Loring's lip lifted, then tightened. "Indeed, I had supposed the Count too much a man of the world—the Italian husbands are not notorious for their attentions to their wives."

To which Nina returned at her leisure: "Perhaps we generalize too much. The nations have their peculiar characteristics, of course, but there are always exceptions. Are you a novelist pure and simple, Mr. Loring? Do not be offended

at my ignorance. You know, I see little of my own people in Italy, and you are a modern classic."

Percy Loring smiled, then took on his profound manner. "I have perhaps concerned myself more exclusively with the novel form, although I have written some poetic prose—essays, that is to say—and also some verse. But verse is a form so enervating, so exacting, so artificial—" He passed his hand over his bald forehead. "It is his life blood, in any case, that the author is pouring out, the precious fluid." He seemed to ponder deeply upon this tragic fact. "But I must bring out my new book this fall. I have been silent so long the public grows impatient, my publishers tell me."

"I suppose," Nina mused, "that it is his real self that an author puts into his work."

"His real self, his best self," Percy Loring agreed touchingly. "His aspiration." His dreamy eyes, fixed as it were upon the contemplation of his ideal, would have moved Mildred to awe. The Countess regarded him an instant but dropped her eyes as he turned to meet them.

"Ah, the subtle tricks with the eyes!" he murmured. "Were they learned in the country of your adoption or are they natural?" She did not answer, seeming carelessly occupied with the illustrations in the book. His eyes followed the movements of her hands.

"They have the lure of Italy, the sparkle of America, those eyes. They fire the blood." He rose, took the book from her hand and seated himself upon the divan beside her.

"The man is jealous of the author," he said. "I shall remove my deadly rival."

"You cannot blame me," Nina retorted lightly, "for my interest in your better self."

"Ah, it is not always that better self to which you appeal," he said in a low voice. His small mouth loosened; the fullness of the lower lip habitually compressed, revealed itself. His eyes took on their peering expression under his lowered lids.

She rose. "I think you have a naïve and mistaken impression of what you call Continental ways, Mr. Loring," she said.

At that moment the door opened and Varesca entered. There was the pause of a second before the two men greeted each other. Mario's quick eyes noted that his wife had just risen from the seat beside her cousin's husband; his quick sense received some vibration from the other man's emotional atmosphere. The flash of relief in his wife's eyes however he did not realize. The Italian often overleaps the mark where woman is concerned. Even the intimacy of marriage with an American wife seldom enables him to overcome the obliquity of his reasoning. Her different sense of truth, her directness, is never entirely clear to him. He must ever translate it into the idiom of woman in his own language.

In a moment the distinguished author left with many distinguished and pompous compliments. When the door had closed upon him Mario frowned. "He comes without his wife. Is that the American custom?"

"If it is," Nina returned serenely, "this is my first acquaintance with it. If I had known that Mildred was not with him I would have said 'not at home.'" This statement Mario characteristically received on the basis that it might or might not be true. Also her added declaration: "I find him rather detestable. It makes me troubled about dear little Mildred."

"Are you really so fond of her?" Mario was still skeptical. "I find her altogether stupid. She has no conception how to use her beauty. She is like one of your new millionaires who does not know the value of his art objects."

"I am fond of her for old time's sake. She was a sweet, unselfish child. I remember how she shared all her things with me when I went into her home a desolate little orphan. She should have married someone like that clean-souled, apple-cheeked Western boy that Fair Randolph had with her Sunday."

"It is certainly a pity to see her tied up to that old hypocrite."

"Perhaps he isn't as bad as we think."

"Worse probably. A pent-up stream runs deep and fast. I suppose he had Puritan fathers."

"His father was a deacon in the Methodist church. Your intuitions are almost feminine, Mario. Perhaps"—her thought returned to her cousin—"she will never find him out."

Mario shook his head. "No, she will wake up. Some day those terrible young eyes of hers will pierce through his and accuse him."

Nina frowned. "I can't bear to think of it." She moved restlessly across the room. Her husband's eyes followed her. After all the years of their marriage she was a riddle to him still.

"He would make love to you this minute if you would let him," he said.

An expression of disgust passed over her face. "He is too odious." Her expression served to reassure her husband as her words had not done. He rose, went over to her side and slipped his arm about her. "At least, I give him credit for sufficient good taste to appreciate you."

She made a little face. "Don't talk about him." She put her hand in his thick hair, shaking his head lightly as one might do with a child or a favorite dog. He took down her hand, crushing it in his.

"When the old Count first saw you he said that you were a dangerous woman." He stared down at her frowning.

Nina rubbed his coat sleeve affectionately. "But time has proved that I am quite harmless."

"It has shown—so far—that I can trust you."

"So far!" Oh, you Italian!"

"But somehow—it is curious—I begin to realize that dangerous quality of yours more here in your own country, where the blood we are told runs more slowly, even though the Italian men went mad about you."

"Well, well, and why is that, I wonder?" It was the tone of one humoring a child.

"Because, I suppose, there is some-

thing here I don't understand. It makes me feel that I don't understand you."

"And you felt before that you did understand me?"

His jealousy and suspicion flamed up. "You think I did not. I dare say you are right. I do not know what goes on in your head."

"So long as you know what goes on in my heart—"

"But do I?"

"Othello!" She made elaborate pretense of smoothing out his frown. "Dear dear, it won't come out."

"Kiss me."

She kissed him lightly on the frowning brows.

"Again—not like that."

She hesitated. The telephone bell rang. She moved to answer it but his clasp tightened.

"The telephone rang."

"Assunta will answer it."

"She will come in here. Mario, what is the matter with you? You have not been like this for ages."

"That does not mean that I forget you are mine."

The bell rang again; footsteps came in the hall and Assunta's voice answered, "Allo." Nina withdrew herself from her husband's embrace as the maid announced in her own language: "The Signora Loring wishes to speak with the Contessa."

At the telephone Nina inquired why her cousin had not come to see her that afternoon with Percy. She noted a slight constraint in Mildred's tone.

"You asked Percy, did you not? He said you didn't mention me."

"Mildred dear, how absurd! He misunderstood. It never occurred to me for a minute that he would come to see me without you."

"You said nothing about it to me this morning."

"I didn't know he was coming."

"It was a misunderstanding"—Mildred's voice came to her a little primly—"but I called you up to ask you about the Opera this evening. I forgot to speak of it this morning. You accepted, didn't you—Cousin Emma's

box? She said you had. She has just telephoned to say that she can't go, so there is an extra seat. The Count is going, I suppose?"

"I don't know. Wait; I'll ask him. Mario"—she called to her husband—"you are going to 'Tristan' with me to-night?"

"'Tristan'? No, I have an engagement with De Champs."

Nina explained to her cousin. "He's not going."

"Not going!" Mildred's tone expressed a disapproving surprise. "But you don't mind going alone—do you want to ask someone in his place? . . . No one? Then may I fill both the seats?"

Nina returned to her husband. He was frowning. "You are going with them then?" he said.

"Would you have me stay home alone?"

"I don't know what time I shall get back." The Count turned in the direction of his dressing room.

"You will be out to dinner?"

"Yes."

"*Buon divertimento*," she returned. But the Count's perfectly decorous exit had somehow the effect of a slammed door. His wife smiled then shivered. She stood a moment in the middle of the floor, then, as it were brushing some disturbing thought aside, rang the bell for her maid with a quick movement.

VIII

SHE was the last to arrive although the overture had not yet begun. Mildred was the only woman. The other occupants of the box were Percy Loring, Arthur Maddox, Daniel Griscom and a Mr. Creston, one of the firm of Percy Loring's publishers. As Nina took the seat left vacant for her beside Mildred she noticed that Griscom, who was behind Creston—the masculine guest selected by Percy for the honor of the front seat—was within easy distance for conversation.

"Not in Turkey yet," she said to him.

"No, just embarking for Italy."

"Italy!" she repeated, startled.

"Didn't you notice that the opera had

been changed? It is 'Bohème' instead of 'Tristan.'"

"'Bohème'—with Caruso?" He nodded. "What a pity Mario did not know!"

"But he had an engagement," the conscientious Mildred reminded her.

"He would probably have broken it. His conscience is of the artistic Latin variety. You know beauty and happiness are the Italian religion."

"But it takes an Italian to practise it," observed Creston. He had a lean, clever face. Nina threw him a responsive glance and wondered what he thought of Percy Loring.

Percy Loring shook his head disapprovingly. "All very well till the day of reckoning."

"That day doesn't inevitably come to them."

"It is the consciousness of wrongdoing that scars the soul," observed Griscom. "If you don't feel wicked, I expect you escape the greater part of the penalty."

"Dangerous ground, young man." Percy Loring again shook his head. "The doctrine of individual morality isn't a safe one to preach."

"Some few people are big enough to be a law unto themselves," said Nina, thinking of Jane Worthing, "but not very many, I fear. Still, as someone has said, sin is a matter of geography. Oriental ideas of sin are often the exact opposite of ours—Japanese honorable suicide, for example."

Then seeing Mildred's sober face she added hastily: "But to be philosophizing with 'Bohème' before us—the very soul of Italy in music!" As she spoke the conductor raised his baton and the flood of passionate melody rose and encompassed them. She glanced at Griscom and found his eyes upon her.

"This is the first time we have heard music together," she said.

"You forget the goat bells up the mountain." She shook her head. "You used to call them ice bells."

"How unreal they were! There are no ice bells in this music. Do you love it, or are you sorry it is not 'Tristan'?"

"I suppose it is a matter of tempera-

ment with most people to like this and not like that. I love all music with the exception of parts of darkest Brahms and disciplinary Beethoven."

"Vandalism," remarked Percy Loring, who seemed to be sharing their conversation.

"Percy doesn't care for anything but the most severely classical music," Mildred informed them, with an air of pride. "He really martyred himself tonight."

"Hardly in consideration of the company," the courtly Percy edited her crude statement.

The music rose and fell, presaging the love story of the light-hearted, ill-fated lovers, and Nina exclaimed: "Why are we talking!"

The curtain went up, disclosing the painter and the poet in their attic. The countrymen of the great tenor greeted him with their customary outburst of enthusiasm. Percy Loring frowned and shook a fastidious hand of disapproval. "And you call those people musical!" he apostrophized.

Nina smiled. "Bless their hearts." Her comment brought an unpleasant look to Percy Loring's face.

"The lady doth protest too much," he observed with an icy smile. "It is difficult to believe that any American girl could become so entirely denationalized."

"Oh, I am not denationalized." Nina's smile was undisturbed. "I don't have to dislike America because I love Italy, do I?"

The tenor had begun a ravishing phrase and Percy raised an admonishing hand. Nina sank back with a long breath. No one spoke again till the end of the act. It was in the middle of the tenor's impassioned song, "*Che gelida Manina*," that her eyes met Griscom's, a meeting that left her breathless with the shock of it. She had the sensation of being swept up and carried to some nameless regions of space. What wild impossible vistas had each within that instant glimpsed within the other's eyes! Then her lids fell and she heard the rapid hammerlike beating of her heart against her sides. It seemed as if

he, Percy Loring, everyone, must hear it. The curtain was down and the wild plaudits and bravos were breaking the spell of the music.

"You are enjoying it?" Maddox leaned forward to ask.

"Enjoying it!" she exclaimed. With the sound of her own voice her self-command returned to her.

"Does it make you homesick for Italy?" Creston asked her.

She flashed a smile at him. "How did you know?"

"But you couldn't hear Caruso in Italy," Maddox informed her. There was the complacency of a childish patriotism in his smile.

"American dollars make Italian romance possible," observed Creston.

Percy Loring's face lighted. "In other ways than opera," he observed significantly. "If our girls but knew—"

It was curious how often the intention of these remarks of Percy Loring's escaped recognition. It is not a penetrating world and does not easily alter an accepted conception of sweetness and light.

"Yes, I fear there are very few of our charming girls who are won like the Contessa by an adoring prince out of a fairy story with both coronet and gold," remarked Maddox, unconscious that his impulse to be flatteringly personal had robbed the author's shaft of its intended sting. Percy Loring's lip tightened. Nina observing it hastened to turn the conversational current into less personal channels.

"I wonder if I meant it when I said I was homesick for Italy? Does one want most the reality or the art that calls it up?"

"This man's singing isn't art," said Percy; "it is an accident." He had heard the comment applied to another singer. "He is a great, coarse—" The vertical lines on either side of his small mouth lifted to express distaste.

He caught the Contessa's smile and flashed an angry look at her. "How can you take him like that," she said, "a great child with a voice that is the very soul of Italy? When I hear him I see Naples—the sea, the sky, the sunshine,

the lovers, the naughty happy children. *Ah, bella Napoli!*"

"The light tragedy of the South," said Percy Loring. It was another phrase that had done good service. "It is made for opera."

"I agree with the Contessa," said Creston. "There is something in Caruso's voice—there is no reasoning about it; it just is."

"It has beauty, I admit," Percy blandly agreed with his publisher, "but it is the purely sensuous beauty of the South." He pushed out his lips contemptuously on the consonants.

"Whatever you call it," said Nina, "there isn't another voice like it."

"The Contessa has the enthusiasm of the convert," Percy Loring smiled.

"Yes, I love Italy," replied Nina. "I don't see how anyone with a soul could help it."

"I should say it was rather a matter of senses than soul," returned Percy Loring.

"Many people confuse one for the other," observed Creston in his quick voice.

"It depends," Dan Griscom spoke from the shadow, "upon whether one has only senses or a soul to understand with. The Countess, we may be sure, Loring, sees something in her Italy that you and I are not able to appreciate. A woman's eyes can see beyond the things of sense to what they suggest or rather symbolize."

Percy Loring fidgeted in his chair, and Mildred, listening with parted lips, looked as if a sacrilege had been uttered. "Surely no one could have any finer appreciation than Percy has," she said childishly.

"My dear partisan child!" Loring exclaimed, but he was visibly nettled.

Nina turned to Griscom. "You haven't been to see Paolo yet; he has asked for you so often."

"I must see him; I want to see him," said Griscom. "I got his dear little letter."

"He was so proud of writing it."

Percy's cool smile interposed between them. "Griscom in the character of child lover! Isn't this something new?"

"Children are certainly devoted to him," said Nina.

"Paolo isn't like other children," said Griscom. "He is in the class with elves and flowers and other things not quite real."

"Sounds like the description of a little girl," commented Percy.

Griscom smiled. "He is not as noisy as most American children." He was grateful for the author's insistent malice forcing him as it did to keep his mind alert to turn aside the unchivalry which any wound to that gentleman's vanity invariably brought forth.

"You should write a book for children, Loring," observed Creston. "A juvenile, in the language of the trade."

While Percy was describing his distaste for the classifications of the trade and explaining the various phases of his conviction about writing or not writing a story for "the child," as he called it, Nina turned again to Griscom.

"When are you coming?" she said. He did not answer, and she turned to look at him. Then for the third time that strange sensation that was almost of panic swept over her as their eyes met. It was like an impulse to escape. But from what? How absurd! She had felt like that once before—a long time ago—the first time she had been left alone with Mario and he had spoken to her. But that was different; that was the cataclysm of the nature of an inexperienced child in the exaltation of its first transcendental love dream.

Griscom rose, and excusing himself rather inaudibly on the ground of a smoke, left the box. Creston engaged Percy Loring's attention. Maddox entertained Mildred and Nina with an account of a picturesque young painter recently arrived "from the wild and woolly," as he rather disloyally expressed it. His account abounded in the current phrases of slang of the better class mixed up with bits of studio jargon that he had picked up in his life on the outskirts. He imagined his description to be "full of color," and from the expression on the Contessa's enigmatic face fancied that he was delighting her with the piquancy of his anecdotal

powers. Mildred's dark eyes fixed upon him heightened his innocent self-satisfaction. In reality neither of them heard a word he said, for even Mildred, who listened to everyone as a matter of conscience, was disturbed by some vague uneasiness concerning the occasional incompleteness of the world's appreciation of Percy.

The Montmartre scene had begun when Griscom returned. At the conclusion of the baritone repetition of Musetta's tumultuous waltz song, the refrain of which runs through the act, Nina turned to him. "How could you miss all that delicious music?"

He looked at her, then his eyes glanced aside quickly as from a sight that hurt. "I have decided to miss more of it. I wonder if I should be believed if I devised a plausible excuse for leaving now?"

"Now?" She looked away from him. "But why—please don't."

"I—I shouldn't have come," he said.

"You are busy—tired?"

He did not answer. Something seemed to beat in the music-filled atmosphere.

"Please stay to find my cab for me. Or else—" She glanced in the direction of Percy Loring, indicating her distaste of the alternative. She saw that Griscom was not himself. He spoke without raising his eyes.

"There is someone else to save you." He glanced at the smooth, complacent face of Maddox.

"He will not insist if—" She broke off. "I want you," she said. Afterward it seemed to her that some other will than her own had spoken.

Without looking at her he yielded. "I will stay," he said.

Percy Loring seemed to have clairvoyantly divined the nature of their conversation. "The Contessa has not forgotten her promise to come with us for supper, I trust."

"Oh, did I promise? I think we must have misunderstood each other. I have been so dissipated lately that I have decided to be very firm tonight and resist temptation." There was an unusual tone in her voice. Mildred gave her a puzzled look.

"Then you must let me see you safely home. Mr. Maddox will look after Mildred. He at least is not refusing our hospitality."

"Oh, thank you, no. It is only necessary for someone to put me in my cab. I am not accustomed— Indeed, we reckon it most unconventional in Italy to be escorted."

"*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," returned the author. "You are in the land of pure intentions now, fair Contessa."

"I hope, for the sake of my native land," remarked Maddox, "that they are not synonymous with good ones. We all know what country *they* pave."

And Mildred, withdrawing inwardly from the conversation, looked at her husband's high forehead and thought how far above these petty frivolous spirits he was. She was disappointed in Nina. She seemed to have lost her ideals.

"I claim at least the honor of escort to the cab." Percy Loring was persistent.

"That privilege has already been conferred upon me," said Griscom.

Percy Loring turned to Nina. "Is this true, Contessa—Nina?"

"I have always found Mr. Griscom a truthful person," she returned lightly.

At the end of the act she rose. "What, you are not going now!" exclaimed Percy Loring.

"Now." Nina smiled extending her hand. "I never can bear to see Mimi die, and it always makes me cry to see Colline sell his coat, so I am going to spare my feelings." She distributed her gay adieus and withdrew into the ante-room of the box. Percy Loring followed.

"At least I may help you on with your wrap"—but it was already in Griscom's hands. "It is easy to see who wears your favor for the evening," was his parting shot as he returned into the box.

"Something must have ruffled our author's vanity this evening," observed Griscom as they walked along the corridor. "I am afraid you are the guilty one."

"I am afraid it is easily ruffled," she answered.

IX

"I TOLD the cabman to wait on the opposite corner," said Nina. "I detest waiting in this lobby."

He took her arm with a strong hand and guided her competently through the maze of motors, carriages and street cars. They found the cab directly. He gave the address to the driver, then stood with bared head extending his hand. She took it. Again she was conscious of his control as his hand closed over hers without lingering pressure. She recalled the look in his eyes in the Opera House. Now he was calm, even smiling. She had not known men like this. A perverse impulse that she did not even think of analyzing until afterward overcame her. She detained his hand lightly.

"Come with me," she said. "Take me all the way home."

Some of the change she had anticipated came into his face. He withdrew his hand hurriedly. An Italian would have increased his pressure. He looked away from her, then turned suddenly and faced her. "Why?"

She leaned back. From the concealing darkness came her voice, low, charged with enchantment: "Because I want you." Still he hesitated. "Isn't that reason enough?"

He turned upon her, shaken visibly but grave, almost stern. "Yes, surely reason enough," he said and stepped inside the door, closing it behind him. When he had gone a block he turned to her. "I don't understand you. You know what you can do but why do you want to? I had believed you to be above that weakness."

"What weakness?"

"Coquetry."

"I ought to be." She recalled her conversation of that afternoon with Jane Worthing and laughed softly, a laugh of self-mockery, then caught it halfway with bitten lip.

"You are laughing at me," he said quickly. "I don't wonder. I had not supposed any woman could work her cruel will upon me like this."

"It is not a cruel will," she said, then

anticipating a possible misinterpretation she added: "I did not mean that it was a kind one. I was wondering—you are so different from Continental men. No Continental man thinks his pride hurt to bend to the caprice of a woman."

"Nina Varesca"—he turned upon her almost sternly—"what is it that you want of me?"

"For the moment? Your society."

"I want a real answer."

"Your friendship."

"You know you have that." His breath came hard; she heard it and began to tremble. He turned and laid a hand upon each of hers. She felt the strong beat of his pulses. "You can do everything, anything, except play with me. I shall not permit you to do that. You can have all of me. You *have* all of me. So far as I am concerned you are the only woman in the world. I don't think you want me to make love to you—"

"No, no," she murmured faintly and made a movement to free herself. For a moment his hands closed tightly upon hers; then he released her, but she seemed still to feel them.

"I thought not. You followed some caprice tonight. I don't understand, but I do not misunderstand. And I tell you frankly I cannot stand this—alone with you without losing my head. I am a man. I can't live always on the heights where you first came to me. Life isn't like that. If you asked me here tonight to play upon me you can do it, to gratify your utmost vanity. I would throw away everything, work, career, life itself, to have you one moment in my arms." He stopped, pressing his hands against his face. Then he went on unsteadily. "But don't, I beg you. It is some woman's whim—you can't know what it does to me. You don't love me; you love your husband, and I—want to love you perfectly without any hurting memory. If you are the woman I think you are, tell me you don't want to play with me like this."

"I don't—I don't!" she cried under her breath. "But don't care like that. Don't let it hurt you—I am not worth it."

He opened the cab door and called to

the driver. "Stop at the corner of Fiftieth Street, please." He turned to her. "If there should ever be any service, however small, that anyone outside your home can give, will you promise to call on me?"

She contrived a stifled, "Yes." The next second the cab stopped. He opened the door and stepped out. He was gone yet still there, his strong hand on hers. What a sense he gave of power—of power to do, to resist, to move mountains—yet he had trembled like other men at the sound of her voice, at her very presence. She covered her face with her hands. She had not known what the love of a real man was like. He could love like that and leave her—because he loved her.

Alone in the darkness of the cab the storm seized and shook her.

X

MARIO had not come home. She found a brief note from him on her dressing table.

I am taking the midnight train for Washington with De Champs. Will wire you when to expect me. M.

What a spoiled child he was! She had always managed him very much as she did her youngest boy. His quick alternations of mood, his direct reactions, were those of an undisciplined child, with the difference that they were the emotions and passions of maturity.

Mario was a faun, irresponsible, pleasure loving. Yet had he been self-conscious, capable of self-analysis, he would have reckoned his volcanic explosiveness as indicative of the greatest emotional depths of which the human heart was capable. She had begun to realize these things long ago, but she seemed only to have consciously admitted it since her return to America. At first the manners of American men had seemed abrupt in comparison with the exquisite finish of the Latin's habit of speech. When she had met Griscom that summer in Switzerland his reserve, his unobtrusive chivalry, his code as she divined it in their brief intercourse, had

seemed to set him apart from other men. That he was a man who stood out among his fellows she felt more keenly now that she had seen him in his own setting, yet that his standards were those of his country and hers she had now come to realize completely; and beside them Mario's selfish unreasoned theories, his easy formulas concerning life and women, his superficial emotional opinions, seemed cheap and childish. Griscom's face as she had seen it that night, the moved note in his voice, the look in his eyes, came sharply back to her, piercing her with that keen sense of something strong yet controlled, possessed of the power to control others. A man who had faced wars without a thought of personal danger, if only in the capacity of news furnisher for his country; a man who could save lives as he had that of her child, swiftly, bravely, without a thought before or afterward. She rang sharply for Assunta. His words had said so little in those wonderful Alpine days. She had not been obliged to make admissions to herself. She knew that his feeling was not only that of friendship. She had become too widely experienced in knowledge of men not to understand that, but he had not forced her to recognize it. An Italian man in his situation would have frankly made love to her. There would have been nothing to be resented by her in this, according to the code of her husband's country. But young as she had been when transplanted to Italy, she had somehow retained much of the essential point of view of her own country. Assunta appeared, and in obedience to her command began to make her preparations for the night, silently since it was not her mistress's will to talk.

Mario did not return the next day, and after a purposeless afternoon spent in driving and calls she dined alone in her room. She had no engagement for the evening. She found herself tired and mentally restless, and taking up a book tried to read. It was a new book with uncut leaves that Percy Loring had loaned her, but a glance showed her that it was not anything she cared for. She picked up another, a new French book,

but she could not concentrate her thoughts upon it. Strains from "La Bohème" ran through her head. Why shouldn't she call up Griscom? It was not too late, only a little after eight. She put the thought from her and bent her eyes upon the book, but after a moment she realized that she had not taken in a word she had been reading. She rose and went to the telephone and gave his number. The next moment she was speaking to the boy at the switchboard of his apartment house. Mr. Griscom was out at dinner, the boy informed her briefly, but he would be back at eight thirty. What name? Any message? She said, "No message," and hung up the receiver, and found that her hand was shaking. She would send a note to his house to be left when he came in. She sat down at her desk and wrote: "If you have nothing better to do this evening won't you come in for a little while? Mario has deserted me temporarily and I am horribly bored with myself—"

She broke off there. What was she doing, and why? After last night, after his last words! What had come over her? Did she want to break down his self-control, as he had said she could—to play with him? If not—what then? Did she want him to make love to her? She caught her breath. How illogical women were! How they deceived themselves! She was like the rest. Of what avail was wisdom, experience? She rose, tore the note in two and threw it aside. She paced the room restlessly, passing into her bedroom where Assunta sat sewing. At that moment the bell of the apartment rang. Assunta answered. Nina, supposing it to be mail or a package, was about to follow her into the reception room, but at the door of the bedroom she met Assunta returning empty-handed.

"The Signor Loring," the girl told her in a low voice. "He came to the door. He said the signora would see him, but she has given me no such instructions—"

"Tell him the Contessa presents her compliments but that she is very tired and cannot see him," Nina replied quickly. "And, Assunta—ask him if he

will be so good as to take back the book he lent me. It is on my desk or the table. He asked me to return it promptly. Tell him I have read it. Speak to him in French."

Assunta showed her white teeth. "*Si, Contessa*, but the signor does not really understand French."

"Make him understand" — Nina spoke impatiently for her — "the best way you can."

A moment later the door closed upon Percy Loring.

Going into the room for her book, she saw the torn pieces of her letter to Griscom, and gathering them up she threw them into the scrap basket.

XI

ABOUT the middle of the month a warm wave came on, and Nina sent Paolo to stay with an aunt who lived in the suburban country. She and Mario went up for Sunday. She had learned through Fairfield Randolph, now Mrs. Brent, that not only Fair and her husband were to be at the club house for the week end but also Percy and Mildred. She had not seen Mildred for some weeks. Percy had continued to call and find her out. Various books had been left at her door, until she had accumulated an entire edition of his works autographed.

As her aunt's motor was undergoing some repairs Nina and the Count had been taken to the country club by some neighbors, the Whites. Her uncle had gone with a friend, a physician, in his single car, taking with him Paolo, who wanted to watch the polo practice.

It had been a winter with little snow, and now although it was March the tennis courts as well as the golf links were in use. Mildred and Harold Wright, their game over, had gone into the main room of the club house to rest.

"It seems good to have a game again." Mildred's cheeks were flushed. "I have hardly played since I was married. Mr. Loring prefers golf, but somehow I have never been crazy about it."

"No, it is sort of an old gentleman's

game, isn't it?" Then consternation at what he had said appeared upon the boy's frank features. "I mean— Of course lots of young men play it." Harold felt that he had successfully covered the tracks of his "break" with that statement.

"Let's have some iced tea," suggested Mildred.

"That's a bright idea." Harold called a waiter and gave the order.

"Plenty of ice and plenty of lemon," added Mildred.

Just at that moment her husband entered. "Mildred, my dear"—he regarded her loosened hair with disfavor—"what a hoyden!"

"I was just thinking how pretty she looked," said Harold Wright.

"A little more neatness would improve your looks as well as your dignity, my dear."

"I'll go fix my hair right away." She flushed deeply under her husband's glance. Percy Loring caught sight of the arriving tray. "Iced tea! Mildred, have some regard for your digestion."

"I never have indigestion, dear, and I am so hot," Mildred pleaded.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Brent came in from the billiard room and Harold Wright hailed them jovially. "Well, well, here comes the bride—tum, tum, te tum! Sit down and have tea with us."

"Thanks; a highball for me," said Brent.

Mildred hurriedly started for the dressing room. Percy followed her a few steps, his eyes bright, his lips tightly compressed. "I am surprised to see you making yourself so conspicuous with that young Wright. Please remember that you are my wife."

Almost in tears, yet with a sudden dignity in her shocked face, Mildred exclaimed, "Why, Percy!" and turning quickly walked away from him. Loring stood still looking after her with anything but an amiable expression upon his face.

He was roused by Fairfield Brent's gay unsubdued voice. "Mr. Loring, come right here and tell me I look like an old married woman. I have been married three whole weeks."

Percy turned with a smile. "Being a scrupulously truthful person, Miss Fair, I couldn't say that."

"She isn't *Miss Fair* any more," grumbled Brent.

"You must excuse the *lapsus linguae*, Mr. Brent. I have known her as Miss Fair longer than you have."

Brent treated him to his unpleasant smile. "Then I shall know where to come when I want points."

Percy Loring's attention had wandered. "An agreeable surprise, the Count and the Countess." He addressed them, drawing them into the group.

"Come, join us," cried Wright, the light and innocent of heart. "The more the merrier. *We* call it iced tea weather, but maybe it's cocktail time for you."

Nina shook her head. "Tea for me, not iced. Varesca can speak for himself."

The Count committed himself to vermouth and seltzer.

"He is conservative about American drinks," his wife remarked. Then she glanced at the author. "Where is Mildred?"

"She'll be here directly. She was rather blown after her tennis."

Nina sat down and Harold Wright promptly seated himself beside her.

"He called her down pretty hard." He spoke in an undertone to the Countess. The movement of his head indicated Percy Loring. "I thought she looked like a peach. But I dare say he didn't mean it the way it sounded."

Nina was amused at his boyish simplicity, his utter unconsciousness of his lack of sophistication. "You are a great admirer of Mr. Loring's, I hear."

"Of his books—well, I should say! I don't know him so awfully well."

"Is he as you imagined him from reading him? Or do only girls have ideals of their favorite authors?"

"Why, I don't know," said Harold Wright slowly. "No, I don't think he is exactly. I thought he would be more of a man's man—although his stuff does read like poetry."

She had a passing curiosity as to this wholesome boy's attitude toward Percy's

literature. "We don't expect men to like sentimental books, but I believe they do—quite as much as women," she said.

Harold Wright stared. "Do you call Mr. Loring's books sentimental?"

"Well, rather; don't you?"

"I just thought they were wholesome and sweet." He looked at her with wondering eyes.

At that moment Percy approached the seat where they were sitting, evidently uncomfortably preoccupied with the cup he was carrying. "Come, my lad, you have monopolized the Contessa long enough. I am bringing her some tea and deserve your seat in return."

"Get another chair," Nina suggested, but Harold Wright jumped up,

"Take mine, sir. There comes Mrs. Loring. I must get her tea for her."

Percy took his seat laughing heartily. "If there is such a thing as being too frank! I had not supposed any cavalier would desert you so joyously." Percy had that petty form of jealousy founded upon vanity that longed to make the woman who attracted him feel that she was undesired by other men, although had such been the case he would not have admired her.

"But you believe, do you not, that one cannot be too truthful!"

Percy's gentle expression and movement of the head signified his approval of a modification of that statement. "When truth is incompatible with chivalry—one should somehow evade the issue." He smiled, pleased with his subtlety, then turned his very personal attention upon her. "I had not hoped for this privilege. You won't see me when I call. But you read my books—I have at least that comfort. I know that my mind touches yours. But why, most ungracious and lovely Countess, will you not answer my notes asking when I can find you?"

"I wrote Mildred the other day asking her to set a day when you would both dine with us, but she has not answered yet."

Percy Loring sat up, his attention suddenly fixed. "I have heard nothing of it. Is it possible that Mildred—"

Nina rose. Percy got up also, the muscles of his throat moved as if he swallowed something. "You are not going to leave me?" he said.

"I am going to speak to Mildred," Nina replied, and walked away leaving him staring after her.

Mildred was alone on the veranda. She seemed embarrassed at her cousin's approach, and Nina divined that she would have avoided the meeting if it had been possible. "Mildred dear, what do you mean by staying away from me like this? You never answered my invitation to dinner; you haven't been near me—" Nina's tone while light and affectionate was direct.

"I asked Delia to telephone you. I am sorry if she forgot and inconvenienced you," Mildred replied without meeting her eyes. "I wasn't able to accept your invitation."

"You asked Delia to telephone me!"

Mildred did not in any way attempt to apologize for the manner of her refusal.

Nina put her hand on her arm. "What is the matter, dear?" she said.

After a moment Mildred answered her directly as Nina had thought she would. "I am disappointed in you, Nina."

"Dear child—disappointed! In what way? What have I done?"

"You have been—you are different from everything I imagined you to be."

Nina looked bewildered. "I don't know what you mean." Mildred turned her clear eyes upon her. They were cold and unfriendly.

"I would rather not talk about it. You understand."

"Indeed I do not."

Mildred was unmoved by her denial. "You evidently don't realize," she said at last, "that I know how you have tried to get Percy to come and see you, and pay attention to you. I suppose you trusted to his not telling me."

For a moment Nina stared at her in stunned silence. "You have misunderstood something," she said at last.

"I would rather not talk about it. I have not misunderstood. Percy admitted himself—reluctantly; he is so chivalrous—that you had been simply

pursuing him with invitations. He asked me never to discuss it with you, but you force me into it."

"I have never given Percy any invitation except to ask you both through him when he has spoken of it. He has misunderstood if he thought so."

Mildred went on, disregarding her. "Fair has told me of seeing Percy going to call on you. You probably didn't realize that, living in the same hotel as she is now, she could not help but notice things. I took it right to Percy, of course, and he said that it wasn't possible always to refuse you, and that Fair had exaggerated, but that he had gone once or twice when he thought you would be out."

Nina Varesca listened in silence. Mildred went on. "Then this morning—I tell you to save prolonging this unpleasantness—he told me about a letter of yours that he saw by accident, a letter to some man telling him that you were alone and that your husband was away and begging him to come and see you."

Nina listened speechless. After a moment she understood. In some way Percy Loring had seen her letter to Griscom. But how—when? And how strange that honorable, straight little Mildred should see nothing to criticize in this action! Truly the logic of love was past understanding.

"It has a melodramatic sound certainly," she said at last. "Yet if you stop to think Mildred dear, there was nothing in the least unconventional in my asking a man I knew rather well to call because I happened to have an empty evening before me. But I don't quite understand how Mr. Loring happened to see the letter you speak of, as it was destroyed and never sent."

Mildred flushed and her head went up. In her eyes was a look that Nina had never seen in them. "It lay on your desk, as I have said, unaddressed and beside a book that you asked Percy to take home. You sent word by your maid, he said, and I suppose she picked it up and handed it to him. It was an awkward accident certainly—for you."

There was a pause in which Nina remembered. The note had been torn in

two, crumpled and cast aside upon her desk. It had lain there when Percy Loring had called that evening. He had waited in the reception room and been sent away, and afterward she had gone into the room, found the note and thrown it into her scrap basket.

"There is nothing in the incident that I feel to be awkward but your misunderstanding of it," Nina said at last.

"I am sorry to hear you say it. But it does not surprise me now. I suppose it's your way over there." Mildred's straight brows contracted. "Fair Randolph says you think nothing of intrigues with your friends' wives and husbands on the Continent—"

But Nina cut her short there. "I shouldn't advise your getting your ideas of life—Continental or otherwise—from Fair Randolph." She turned to leave. "I am sorry, deeply sorry, for all this, Mildred."

"It has been a terrible thing for me. I had thought you something so different."

Mario, back from a game of golf, came up to the steps. The two women, facing the other way, absorbed in their conversation, did not hear him until he was upon them.

"I have tried not to see it—but it has been forced upon me. You have simply tried to have a flirtation with Percy, that is all; and it is not your fault that it has failed." Then Mildred without turning went back into the club house, and Nina turned to face her husband.

XII

HE had heard the last words perhaps or caught the import of the situation with a more subtle sense than hearing.

"Have you then been amusing yourself with your cousin's husband?" he said. "I have been told that you were not lonely while I was gone."

She smiled at him as at a child overwrought with some fancied grievance. "He called once and I was not at home to him." Then at his ejaculation of skepticism she took a different tone. "Mario dear, if I wanted to have an in-

trigue wouldn't you give me credit for better taste?"

His eyes searched hers. "I think you have told me the truth so far—*ma-chi lo sa?*"

Nina smiled and shook her head. "And you—" She stopped herself. "Oh, you untruthful people, how you depend upon other people's telling you the truth! Dear old Mario, don't be silly—it's bad enough having Mildred misunderstand without your doing it."

Mario frowned. "Very likely. As you say, I give you credit for better taste. But if it were true I should kill him—or you."

"Take him, please, Mario. Then Mildred could marry the nice Wright child. The old maids could find another literary idol. I need to live and look after you and the children. Don't be a goose."

"How is it"—he turned upon her, accusing her, with the wonder of a hurt child—"you can do this to me when you have been my wife nine years?"

They were still alone upon the veranda. Nina laid her hand upon his arm. "Do you really love me as much as if you weren't married to me, Mario?"

He looked into her eyes a moment, then put her hand away. "You are much more of a cynic than I am. That is not like a woman."

"It is because I *am* a woman. All women practise cynicism whether they are conscious of it or not."

He became suddenly tense again. "Aren't you happy?"

"Of course, *ragazzo*."

"Why do I care so much about you?"

It was the protest of the creature of sense that would be happy in the sunshine, restless under discomfort.

"That is not in your usual happy style."

He stared at her, his face dark and frowning. "It isn't the way a man usually feels about his wife."

She smiled. "Not just a question of property rights?"

He looked down at her, his eyes troubled. She was his, this delicate, fragrant, subtle creature. He could read

the admiration and desire in other men's eyes, and knew she was all his; why then did she make him feel like this?

"What do you mean by that? Sometimes I wonder—"

"Please don't begin wondering, Mario."

"Sometimes I wonder if I feel this way because I know in my heart that I don't really know you."

She glanced at him. "That is a strange thought for an Italian to have about a woman."

"But you are not an Italian woman."

"Mario, it doesn't suit the Italian temperament to become introspective."

"You treat me as if I were a child—" Suddenly he seized her passionately, looking into her eyes. "You are my wife, the mother of my children; and sometimes I look at you—and feel as if you had never been mine—"

"Someone will see us." She released herself hastily, then seeing signs she knew in his face, she had desperate recourse to acting. "That June in Venice—have you forgotten?"

"Ah—but you don't feel like that now."

"Neither do you. One's feeling changes."

"But I love you more sometimes—more than then—"

"When some nonsense stirs up this primitive man jealousy."

"I wish you were a little more primitive."

"You wouldn't like me so well, Mario—or so long."

It seemed as if he could not withdraw his eyes from her face. "You are too clever for a woman. A woman like you shouldn't be clever. It's too much power."

She laughed and shook her head. "Too clever for a woman! That sentiment is out of date here."

"But your life is not to be lived in America."

She started, shocked at the pang that shot through her with that thought. She loved Italy but she was beginning to realize that she was after all an American. She turned away. He caught her arm. "Look at me."

"Mario, don't be melodramatic—or if you must be, not here."

"Can you look me in the eyes and tell me there isn't any other man you care more for at this minute than you do for me?"

She looked up at him and made a little Italian gesture of protest. "Mario, can you look me in the eyes and tell me you haven't made desperate love to—how many women—in the last year?"

"Answer me."

She looked away, then into his eyes, the direct look of the Anglo-Saxon woman that so baffles and disconcerts the Italian man. "Do you really think you need to doubt my affection without evidence or reason?"

"I love you," he said in Italian.

"I love you, too. You know that," she answered in the same tongue, then in English. "But that is no reason why we should act like an opera. Someone is coming."

Griscom and Harold Wright had come out on the veranda and were lighting cigarettes. "That dago count is just crazy about his wife, isn't he?" Harold Wright glanced at them between approval and amusement. Griscom did not respond. "I don't wonder," Harold concluded; "she is a fascinating woman—sort of uncertain like that perfume she uses. Now you get it and now you don't. You never know just where you are at with her. She keeps you guessing. Sort of promises, and all the time you half believe she is laughing at you, only you don't mind it. But she isn't as pretty as Mrs. Loring."

"It is fortunate we are not all in love with the same woman," replied Griscom.

"I wasn't talking about love," said the boy, opening his eyes. "They are both married women."

Griscom smiled. "So was Francesca. Some people have been unfortunate enough to be late at the tryst with the woman of destiny."

Harold wondered what he meant. Then seeing the Count and his wife turning as if to leave the porch he went up to them. "Count," he said boyishly, "there is an awfully pretty girl inside

who is dying to meet you. I promised her I would try to persuade you."

The Count hesitated an instant. He was to Griscom's eyes bearing the traces of some excitement. "Go meet the pretty girl, Mario," his wife urged him. He looked at her, still doubtful. "Be very nice to her, but not too nice, or I shall be jealous." She made a little face, affectionately mocking him. Somehow the little maneuver had the desired effect. He went off smiling.

"The Count seems to have had a devastating effect upon all the young women present," Griscom remarked after a moment's silence.

"Yes. The Italian men are very attractive to our girls. They have the adoring manner, and in point of fact women are terribly important to them, the most important thing in life, and that is naturally gratifying to us."

"Yes, I suppose women do prefer that sort of man."

Looking at her he noted that she wore no outer wrap. "Won't you catch cold with nothing around you?" he said.

She shook her head. "It is really hot today."

Then a silence fell between them. "I see you are not in Turkey yet," she said.

"How do you know? This may be my astral body."

She swept his tweed sleeve with the tips of her fingers. "You feel real." It was scarcely a touch but she read consciousness of it in his face and spoke hurriedly to change the current. "I am glad you are not going."

"It isn't decided. They may not send anyone. They are using Associated Press news so far."

"Do you want to go? I suppose you do or you wouldn't."

"Oh"—he drew a tired breath—"I like it better than office work. Simplifying and sugaring up news into editorials for the consumption of the average idiot isn't very inspiring work. Newspaper stuff isn't literature in any case, but at least if you go looking for trouble—seek out wars and rumors of wars—there is something doing to talk about."

She felt some undercurrent of care or unhappiness in his voice. He was thinner

and his face had a different expression. Her instinct warned her to avoid anything verging upon the personal. "Speaking of literature," she said, "I have been having a great intellectual treat. I have been reading Percy Loring's works in chronological order—at his request—that I might observe what he calls the trend of his mind in its development."

"I am curious to learn your judgment."

"Well, 'The Silver Cloud' reminded me of nothing so much as a painted lady masquerading as a nun."

"Of course you are able to pierce that cloud. But do you know that his books are supposed to have done a great deal of good—even to have influenced lives! That Wright boy told me some such yarn about himself."

"How do you account for it? Jane Worthing and I were talking about it the other day."

"The vast appeal made to the majority by sugary sentimentality."

"That is what Jane says. I don't know your public, of course, and it seemed inexplicable to me. So far as influence goes, I think it is more or less of an accident what influences one at a certain time. It is when the hour has struck within yourself. I can see how Percy Loring would be an old maid's darling and a sort of literary matinee idol. He has some obvious sense of poetry and there is a great deal of talk about ideals, but what I can't see is how he can appeal to a man. Yet that Wright boy is crazy about his books."

"But he is a boy, not especially penetrating and not at all critical, a boy with an innocent heart."

Nina Varesca smiled. "I am afraid Percy Loring's heart is not innocent."

"I am afraid not."

"That is the trouble—that he is such a hypocrite," Nina reflected. "I could stand his banality and all that if he were in any way what he pretends to be. That is one thing about Continental men, however material they may be—and they do, I think, lack the aspiration of the American—they feel no obligation to feign the virtues they have not."

"Evidently you have found him out."

"It doesn't seem to me that that requires much penetration. Does the world in general believe in him?"

"I fancy it does. The unthinking sentimental world likes to believe in sweetness and light—and that is a good thing, too—so when once it has fastened that label upon a person he can travel far on the strength of it. I feel convinced that some very wicked and ill-meaning people have died accepted and canonized saints."

"It seems as if the world's estimates were largely a matter of chance, luck—or one's stars perhaps. People's sins *don't* find them out half the time. And you don't have to hear of people being hanged for crimes they didn't commit to realize how many scapegoats there are in the world. There is something fatalistic in those things, I believe."

"The Percy Lorings of America are, I suppose, a result of having a higher standard of conduct than can be universally lived up to," said Griscom. "But I can't think that an argument against the standard."

"You don't? I have been wondering."

"No, I believe that it is better that the individual man should become a hypocrite—with all the misery that that can entail upon people who love and trust him—than to admit a lower standard for the community."

"These differences all interest me. I left here so young, yet I am so American inside," she said. She seated herself upon the low railing of the veranda. He noted the light, soft grace of her action, her dark eyes under the shadow of her hat, the red rose in her dress. Every little accent and expression of her personality seized him vividly, hurt him with the sense of her remoteness. But no hint of this emotion was in his dry remark: "But you are not quite like an American woman."

"An American translated into Italian, perhaps."

Raising her eyes she found his upon her. And with that meeting the sense came to her of something rising in them, something that she feared, something that if it overflowed would overwhelm

them both. She half closed her eyes an instant to shut it out, but he did not speak or move in her direction.

"You would not accept Paolo's little invitation to supper. He was so disappointed," she said.

"I—I couldn't," he said in a low voice.

Mario, bareheaded, came out on the veranda. As he came toward her a vivid yet utterly impersonal sense of his physical beauty came over her. No wonder women were foolish about him.

"Nina, Loring told me you were still out here. I have a telephone message that will take me back to town at once." He reached her side and saluted Griscom. "About the sale of that piece of property," he explained.

"I'll be ready directly."

"There is no necessity to take you away. I must see the man at once but nothing will be settled till tomorrow. You had better stay here overnight with your aunt as you planned. It is so warm."

"I would rather go with you."

"I don't see how you can. There is only the doctor's runabout to be had at the moment. He has offered to take me to the station. I must make quick time."

"The Whites would be glad to let us use their motor."

"No time for plans, *cara mia*." Her evident anxiety to go with him reassured her husband.

Percy Loring, who had followed the Count in his leisurely fashion, joined them. He dreaded the outside air upon his bare head, but something at that moment was stronger than his omnipresent fear for his health. "I will see that the Contessa gets home safely," he said.

"I was about to claim the privilege," said Griscom, aware of her lack of enthusiasm for the author; but to his surprise she said to her husband: "Mr. Loring can take me. Don't wait to bother about it."

Percy looked jubilant, but the Italian's face darkened. "As you choose," he said and walked quickly away.

"I'll return to learn your pleasure as

to the hour, Contessa," said Percy, for the breeze had ruffled his thin locks and he was nervous.

So again Nina and Griscom were left alone. She started to return to the club room but he asked her: "Why wouldn't you go with me? You don't want to go with Loring."

"His vanity is so sensitive. He is Mildred's husband. I don't want him to hate me."

"It wasn't because—I lost my head last time?"

"Did you lose your head? I can't imagine it."

"I beg your pardon." He bit his lip. Against his will his eyes were drawn to her, and as he looked he saw that suddenly, exquisitely, she smiled. Turning he saw a man in the livery of the club house approaching holding a little boy by the hand.

"Paolo," she said. "He is staying with my aunt out here. We let him come over to watch the polo. One of the club-house waiters is an Italian, and he begged to be allowed to take him about."

Paolo began to run as he caught sight of his mother. She lifted him up in her arms, set him beside her on the veranda and kissed him. The Madonna light had come into her face. She glanced at Griscom and saw a strange look in his eyes.

"Do you know who that is, Paolo?" she said to the child.

Paolo looked at the man with his great eyes, his father's eyes. Then a light broke over his face. "Mr. Griscom," he cried. "Mr. Griscom!" Then he slipped down from the railing and ran up to him.

"How are you, old man? I am awfully glad to see you." Griscom smiled and put out his hand, but the child's sensitive face fell.

"He isn't glad to see me," he said.

"Of course I am, Paolo, but you have grown—you are so large I hardly know you."

But the light would not come back to Paolo's face. "I knew you," he said.

His mother spoke in Italian to the adoring Neapolitan waiter: "Would you

be so kind as to show him the stable where they keep the polo ponies?"

Radiant the two children—the servant and the little Count—went off together. Nina's eyes followed them with a smile.

"Italy is the true democracy, I sometimes think. They have a democracy of happiness—everyone rejoices with him who rejoices, peasant or prince; a democracy of sex, for any man may admire any woman—it is reckoned as tribute, not impertinence; a democracy of art, for they feel their art is a universal possession. If you were Percy Loring you would tell me that I had thought that out before—and I have."

He did not respond to her smile. "I think in your heart you love Italy better than America," he said.

She smiled. "*Qui lo sa?*" She said it with a little Italian shrug.

"Don't talk Italian to me," he said almost roughly, then broke off. "I am rude. Forgive me. My nerves are raggy. I hope I didn't hurt Paolo's feelings."

"For the moment perhaps—he has talked so much about you; but children forget easily."

Suddenly he broke out: "Oh—his little face—I can't look at it! His child and yours—your face with his eyes! Don't mind what I say. That is why I couldn't come to see him after I had seen you together and understood."

She did not answer. Her face was turned so that he only saw the curve of her cheek and the shadow of her dark hair under her hat.

"It is a tremendous bond, a child—isn't it?"

"Oh, yes—it is a bond. Even without love it is a bond."

"But with it—" He whitened. "That happiness I shall never know. What a queer old world! Why must so many of us love the wrong woman?"

She turned a strange face upon him an instant. "The wrong woman! Can it be the wrong woman if it is the right love? Oh, we talk about these things and read about them, but how many of us know? Jane Worthing loved the wrong man but she knows—and paid for it with her

heart's blood! No one knows what love is until one has found out what it costs. All kinds of things masquerade under its name—passion, vanity, selfishness—but real love—how many of us have caught even a far-away glimpse of its face?"

He was startled, for her tone, quiet as it was, was one he had not heard from her before.

"Even real love isn't often free from these things," he said. "Just what do you mean by real love—capacity for sacrifice?"

She shook her head. "More than that. A selfish love can obliterate itself at times for the object of its obsession. Real love is—" She broke off and returned suddenly to her light tone. "I feel like a Gibson illustration—golf links for background"—she made a gesture—"man and woman appropriately dressed telling each other what real love is."

He stared at her a moment frowning. "I used to think I saw a little bit into the real woman," he said, "but I begin to feel like Wright, who said a few minutes ago that one never knew where he was at with you."

She smiled. "I wouldn't have supposed his healthy young mind capable of doubt on any subject." She turned and met his eyes, and before the thing that was in them hers fell.

"Just once, let me see in a little bit," he said. "What is the thing you find worthy to be called love?"

She answered after a moment without looking at him: "What I call love is something that can rise above passion, vanity, selfishness, even jealousy—and wish only what is best for the one it loves."

"Rise above passion, jealousy, selfishness!" he repeated. "You mean rise above any sense of personal possession." She nodded without looking at him. "You did not say be free from these things."

"I suppose that would be scarcely human."

He glanced at her. She had loved enough to have sounded these depths! How could a man like Mario Varesca

have inspired such a love in this woman? But then what man could ever know the kind of man a woman will love? He stood a moment with his eyes upon the rim of bare trees against the sky, then turned upon her with eyes that no longer avoided her. "I will prove to you that my love is real. I will come to your house, accustom myself to seeing you with your husband; I will be your friend and his so that if the opportunity ever comes I will be allowed to serve you. I will never say another word to let you know how much I love you."

She turned abruptly and stared over the monotonous expanse of the golf links. The club-house door opened, breaking the silence, and Percy Loring came out, drawing on what seemed to be an absolutely new pair of driving gloves.

"Are you ready, Contessa?" he said. Percy sometimes preferred the elegance of the title to the intimacy of the Christian name.

She turned at the sound of his voice. "Oh, is it time to go?" Something in her face and voice caught the attention of both men. She was paler than usual and her eyes looked large and dark; the controlled mold of the lips had for the moment relaxed into something almost savoring of tragedy. Griscom turned from the sight with a pang, conscious of her unhappiness, ignorant of its cause. Both facts hurt him keenly.

Percy Loring stared. "That rose"—he indicated a small fragrant *Jacquemint* rose in her belt—"is the color of your lips." He considered her with deliberate coquetry. "Yes—quite the Continental effect—red lips, radiant pallor, shadowy eyes. Dare I ask for the rose, Contessa?" He extended his hand.

"The rose"—her hand closed over it instinctively—"Paolo gave it to me. You are ready? I will get on my wraps."

Percy Loring glanced at his watch. "We have half an hour for our ride. That will get you at your aunt's in good time to dress for dinner and also permit us to go the long way through the woods. The poetry of the brown woods is something so few have felt adequately—or at least expressed. The brown woods"—

he lingered over the words with a tender smile.

"Half an hour!" she exclaimed turning. "Why, it only takes five minutes."

Mildred came out on the veranda. She started back as she caught sight of her cousin but almost immediately recalled herself. "Percy, Fair is going now," she said to her husband. "And we ought to make this train, too. You know Cousin Emma is coming tonight."

"I had forgotten that, and now I have promised to take your cousin to your aunt's. She is stopping there tonight. The Count had to go back to town on a hurry call. I will meet you at the station. But don't wait; if I miss this train, I will take the next one—it will be quite time enough."

"I hope you won't miss it." Mildred was frankly wistful.

"I will go back with the Whites," Nina put in quickly. "They are probably expecting me to go with them, anyway."

"The Whites"—Percy adjusted his gloves with nice deliberation—"have gone home. I think they thought you had gone with the Count."

"She can go with me if she will. I am unemployed," said Griscom. She did not look at him as she answered: "Oh, thank you. Someone will take me. There is no need to burden anyone who has to catch a train. Don't wait for me, Mr. Loring."

Percy Loring's face hardened. "I *shall* wait for you; you are going with me," he said. Mildred stared, her lips apart. Nina went inside, Griscom following her.

"Why won't you go with me?" he said.

"It will make you late. There are plenty of ways to get home." She moved away, leaving him with the last words.

Outside Percy Loring turned to his wife and spoke with a tightening of the lips. "My dear, this is a situation into which I was forced, but I cannot have a scene over it now. I must take your cousin to the station, however much you may disapprove of her—and rightly."

"Of course, dear," replied Mildred quietly. "I had made no objection."

At the door Nina returning wrapped for departure met Griscom. The red rose was in her hand. She handed it to him. "Paolo's little rose—will you take it? I couldn't bear to crush it under this heavy coat."

The words were spoken with her usual light smile and Griscom wondered if he had imagined the face he had seen a moment ago. He took the fragrant little flower wordless. She put her hand on the door, which was heavy and resisted. He put out his hand quickly, unintentionally covering hers, saying, "Let me do it." She felt the strong vitality of his touch through her glove. The sense of it clung to her fingers although the pressure had rested upon them but an instant.

"That door always sticks. The house committee should be told of it." His tone was not steady. "Have you found someone to take you home?"

"I have thought of someone. I am going out on the links now to invite myself."

"Let me take you! It's easy enough to find a gig." She shook her head. Percy Loring hurried up at the sight of them in the doorway. "You are coming with me. I insist. I shall be most offended if you do not." He spoke in a low tone, glancing constantly backward in the direction of his wife. "Griscom has nothing here to take you in. You would have to wait for him to borrow a machine from someone who owns one."

She shrugged, disclaiming the teapot tempest. "*Va bene.*" At that moment a light cart with one horse was led up by a groom, for whom, Nina noted, there was no seat in the conveyance.

"Here we are!" Percy Loring was in high spirits now. As she did not move he added, "This is our trap."

"This! I thought we were going in your machine."

"Our car isn't here. We came with the Brents. I thought you understood," Percy explained blandly.

"I see—you have been borrowing," Nina smiled.

Two people coming in from the golf links greeted Mildred, who moved forward to exchange a few words with

them. Percy bent a benevolent regard upon Nina. "It is far more delightful to drive. The air is full of spring; the moon is rising, the slender crescent moon. One never appreciates the moon in a car, do you think?"

"Really I hadn't taken the moon into consideration." Nina finished adjusting her veil and glanced at the stately author. "Wait a moment," she said and went quickly off across the grass toward a group clustered upon an adjacent green.

Mildred approached her husband. "You are going to drive, Percy?" Her tone was surprised. Idealistic as she was, she was aware of her husband's fear of horses and wondered.

"Nina preferred it, my dear," he replied with a deprecating shrug. "What could I do?"

"She preferred it? She didn't act as if she did just now."

Percy buttoned his gloves with a smile. "My dear, I have long since given up expecting women to be consistent."

Mildred turned quickly aside to conceal the tears that sprang to her eyes. Nina came up to the veranda, leading Paolo by the hand.

"Paolo wants to go with us, Mr. Loring, instead of waiting for Uncle Wilfred to finish his game. He won't crowd us. I am sure you will be glad to have him." Percy Loring's face became apoplectic. He was obliged to swallow twice before he contrived to say, "Delighted, I'm sure." And when he walked down the few steps he almost fulfilled his constant horror of stumbling.

XIII

ON her return to town Nina's first meeting with her husband was in the office of the lawyers who were negotiating the sale of the property, but she saw in his eyes when they rested upon her the look they had had in the days before their marriage. As they were driving home in the motor she said: "Mrs. Montague Smith has invited us to the Opera tonight. I took the risk of ac-

cepting for you, too, because it is 'Pagliacci' and 'Cavalleria'—and the last week of the Opera."

"Very well; so long as we leave when I wish. I do not feel in the mood to talk, least of all to your Mrs. Montague Smith."

"She is very pretty, Mario."

He gave an ejaculation of self-mockery. "I think of no one but you now. You know that. You laugh—" his voice shook "Yet ever since I have been in your country—which I hate—you know I have not spent half an hour with any other woman."

"I do not know, Mario. I am not jealous."

His face darkened. "Why are you not? There is no love without jealousy."

"Ah, yes, there is."

"It is a kind that I do not know or care about."

"It is the kind that lasts, dear."

He made an impatient movement. "I *am* jealous—then—jealous of these men of your country. You like them. They interest you. I see the difference in your face when you talk with them."

"I would rather talk to them perhaps than to most Italian men. But you are not jealous of talk, Mario."

"Of what do men and women talk if not of love?"

She smiled again. "That is the difference. You cannot understand. American men do not talk of love—at least in the way Italians do—unless they are serious."

"Of what, then—"

"Oh—books, things, amusements, life—"

"*Ma!* All talk leads to but one thing with a woman like you. *Diol!*" He clenched his hand and frowned into the muddy street choked with traffic. "How ugly, how hideous! Everything hurts the eye. I am wretched. I want you to myself, back under our skies of Italy." Suddenly he turned, caught her in his arms and kissed her fiercely.

"Mario!" She disengaged herself breathlessly. "Please—not—here—in the street! It is light—people can see."

He turned from her then, staring out the window. She heard his uneven

breath. Her heart was beating like a hammer against her sides, not as it had once quickened at his kisses, but with the shock of that moment's revelation. She could endure association with her husband so long as he demanded of her such affection as she gave her son, but not this passionate demand of the lover. After the torturing jealousy that had followed so swiftly upon the breaking of her first idealistic love dream any sense of possession in Mario had died in her. Later this other affection that she now felt for him had come to take its place. Yet she had accepted without revulsion his periodic outbursts of love making up to that summer three years ago. What had made the difference? She knew the answer.

She glanced at him and met his eyes. He was gnawing his lip. His face was pale and discomposed, his eyes a slumbering fire. She tried to smile. "What a volcano!"

"Are you not afraid that it will sometime destroy?"

She shook her head. "I know my Italy too well. The volcano sends out flames and smoke but it does not destroy"

He laughed with a quick indrawing of the breath. "You are so sure that you understand the Italian heart?"

She nodded. "It is a practical heart. You like to be comfortable, you Italians. When emotions become painful—pouf—you shrug them away."

"Do we then never kill for love?"

"Not often, north of Napoli."

"My mother was a Meridionale."

"I never knew you to boast of it before."

"Ah"—he caught her hands; the Italian's swift impatience of protracted verbal parrying seized him—"words—words—what are words—"

Foreseeing another outbreak she drew back quickly. "Mario—please—you forget. We are on Fifth Avenue—almost home."

He dropped her hands. He was not one accustomed to control, and his face darkened with the tragic sense of denial. She looked at him almost wondering that she had no response to this vehement

love making of his. His face—beautiful as were the men's faces in the portraits of the Renaissance—was alight with the fiery passions of a long line of men who had loved life and used it recklessly. The subdued flamelike quiver in his eyes made her close her own as from a sight she dreaded. She saw with her cool recording senses that the warm curves of his mouth were beautiful, yet she shrank from his kisses with a revulsion so sharp that it terrified her.

The cab stopped at the hotel. She went ahead to her room. Mario stopped to send a telegram in the office, but in a moment she heard his step. He touched the bell, then tapped on the door, a characteristic signal that announced his identity. She opened it hoping some distraction had changed his mood, but the first glance at his face proclaimed the futility of this hope. He went past her into his room and shut the door. She sank down in a chair exhausted. Perhaps he would go off now in one of his childish fits of resentment. A wave of relief swept over her at the thought. She heard him moving about his room and wondered. Then, catching sight of the clock, she rose hurriedly and rang for Assunta. In any case she had accepted Mrs. Montague Smith's invitation and must get dressed.

As Assunta was fastening a gold network headgear into her dark hair Mario knocked at the door and presented himself dressed for the evening. "You look like a *donna di Luini* with that head-dress," he remarked.

"I am glad you didn't say Mona Lisa. Don't you like it?" She glanced back and met his eyes. Something in them gave her a little shock of surprise. The fire had given place to a wistful sadness. Poor old Mario! She hadn't supposed him capable of that look. He glanced away from her consideration quickly. "I do not approve of it," he said.

"Is it too conspicuous? I will take it off."

He lifted his eyebrows and turned away. "Not that. Only that it seems unnecessary to make yourself more dangerous."

They were both in the outer room now. The cloth was laid for dinner; the waiter might appear at any moment. She spoke suddenly out of her real self: "It is only for that—for what little beauty I have—that you care. If I should lose it you wouldn't love me any more. You do not care for anything real in me—"

"I do not care for anything real?" He stared. "What do you mean?"

"What Mildred would call my soul." She was smiling then.

He shook his head. "I don't understand."

"Of course you don't."

He stared, startled a moment, then replied: "I cannot imagine you as otherwise than you are."

That was Mario, she reflected. She gave him a glimpse into her real self but he could only see her from his characteristic standpoint; he must relapse into the racial groove of thought. Then the waiter entered with the soup.

XIV

IN the Opera House she realized that the mood was still on him. He would even arrest himself in conversation to note her words with baldheaded rotund Montague Smith, who sought not to disguise his admiration. In the intervals between the two operas—"Cavalleria" had been first on the program—Percy Loring, sighting them from an orchestra chair, came into the box. He was warmly welcomed by his hostess but his attention was frankly and restlessly focused upon the Countess.

The Countess however seemed to become suddenly fascinated by the conversational powers of Montague Smith. The author soon rose, his wounded vanity writhing visibly upon his features.

"I suppose to you dwellers of sunny Italy these childish tragedies of impulse seem very serious," he observed. "But I," with a gesture, "hunger for the heights of Walhalla."

"Certainly the tragedy of 'Pagliacci' does not seem childish to me," responded the Count.

"The violence is childish," returned the author, apparently addressing someone in the auditorium to whom he directed his opera glass.

"Your point of view would not do you honor in our country," returned the Count, yet so lightly that his words did not seem a discourtesy. "It is the difference between the childish hot-blooded South and the grown-up philosophical North; is it not so?"

The author disclaimed decision. His implication was not flattering. A moment later with a small tight smile he bowed himself out.

"How romantic it must be to be married to an Italian," Mrs. Montague Smith observed pensively to Nina, "and to such a fascinating one! It must be like living in a novel or an opera."

"Did you ever see an Italian tenor as good-looking as Mario?"

"No, I never did. If we had one I suppose the Paderewski mania would be nothing in comparison!" She contemplated Nina with a smile. "How delightful to see a really romantic international marriage such as one reads about!"

Nina laughed. "In point of fact, I believe it is the Anglo-Saxon who is really romantic. No Italian or Frenchman—or German, for the matter of that—begins to have the sentiment or the self-forgetfulness of the practical American and the so-called phlegmatic Englishman. It seems to me that most Continentals consider what is most advantageous for themselves in their marriages and then—Italians particularly—adjust themselves to it in the most comfortable way."

Mario, who had heard, glanced at her curiously. "The Count does not agree with you perhaps," suggested Mrs. Montague Smith.

"Oh, I do not speak of Mario. I have never considered him to be like other men, and I should be heartbroken if he did not realize that I am not like other women." She sketched her little affectionate caricature lightly with one of her illusive smiles for him. It had its effect, rather more than she had desired, indeed. His face became radiant like a

child's with his quick emotion. Mrs. Montague Smith's romantic soul was thrilled at contemplation of the picture, and even Montague Smith told himself with a mild oath that it was a good thing the "dago" appreciated what he had got.

The curtain rose on "Pagliacci." Nina released from the necessity to talk, watched Mario and reflected. In spite of her belief in what she called the Italian's practical heart, she was conscious that there was something that seemed more serious about this mood. It even shot through her mind uncomfortably for an instant that Mario might do something foolish. There was a somberness about his face that suggested disturbing possibilities. But what nonsense! The Italian dramatic face—an inherited face. Mario's great-grandfather might have done desperate deeds because of some woman, but never comfort-loving Mario. She smiled at herself.

The opera had progressed to the point of Canio's tragic outbreak, that impassioned outpouring of Italian melody that brings forth storms of applause even when not sung by the greatest tenor of Italy. At the conclusion Mario rose. A glance at him set Nina's heart beating with apprehension although her face did not reveal the fact.

Mrs. Montague Smith glanced up at them. "Must you go?" Her voice was lost in the sound of clapping hands and frantic bravos. But Nina understanding, nodded. The curtain rose, disclosing the stricken husband smiling his pleasure in the appreciation of his audience. The applause died down as he made a sign to the conductor, who raised his baton.

"He is going to sing it again," Mrs. Montague Smith exclaimed as excitedly as if the whole thing had not occurred dozens of times before. Mario leaned, still standing, against the wall, his eyes upon his wife, and the amiable tenor discovered his wife's infidelity anew and proclaimed his discovery in terms of melodic anguish that ravished the hearts of his hearers, and at the end again broke into the convulsive sobs for which no man of the expressive races feels shame.

"If we only might stay for the end!" Nina murmured to her hostess, who had announced her intention of remaining.

"But this, after all," Mario supplemented, "is the climax of the music."

Nina knew what was coming; she braced herself to meet it as they waited in the lobby for their carriage, the cold gusts blowing in with the constant opening of the door, yet it was not for that that she shivered.

Alone in the motor, the moment they were in the darker side street she was in his arms; with set teeth she nerved herself to bear it. She could not hope to turn this mood. She remembered one other like it, the first year of their marriage when he had become in some way conscious of the change in her and his jealousy had fastened itself upon a French artist who was painting her portrait. That mood had passed as he became reassured of her affection and the untruth of his suspicions. This must pass also.

He was covering her with kisses, her face, her hands, her wrists, crushing them savagely in his grasp. Then suddenly he stopped, breathless. "Don't I hurt you?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you cry out? Ah, *Dio—basta*—there is no way I can move you, hurt you! I am nothing to you but a child, a toy, a joke—"

"Mario—don't be foolish. After all these years—surely you know—you understand."

He dropped her hands and withdrew himself to the farther corner of the cab. The storm passed for the moment leaving him quiet.

"You shrink from me," he said in a low voice. "Your lips are cold. I kiss the corpse of my love." He seized her in a grip of iron. "What is it? Why is it? You no longer love me—"

"Yes, yes, Mario—"

"You do not love me. You love someone else. Is it that old—is it your cousin's husband? Answer me!"

"Of course not. How absurd—how can you ask such a question?"

"Then it is some other man. I shall find him—never fear; I shall know—"

"Mario dear, don't be so ridiculous."

She slipped her arm around his neck and patted his cheek, but he put it from him.

"Don't touch me. It is as you might touch a woman—a child. Never touch me again if you cannot love me—*mail*!" "Never!" How easily they said it! And how different the grim significance of the word upon Latin lips!

The cab passed into the area of light by the hotel, and glancing at his face she had a little shock. For the second time that night apprehension laid its finger upon her heart.

XV

PERCY LORING and his wife sat together in the library while the author looked over his mail. He always liked to have his wife near him at such times for sympathy and response. Suddenly he looked up with the smile that his wife found so beautiful. "Listen to this, my dear. Here is one from a devoted young reader that is more than usually interesting. A young girl who had had, it seems, a singularly tragic life of misunderstanding and lives in a sordid unideal environment, was about to take her own life when she chanced to read my 'Silver Cloud,' and it made her think that if there were people with such beautiful thoughts in the world she could have the courage to live. 'The courage to live'—that is a beautiful phrase. I must remember those words."

His wife listened with glowing eyes. "I am sure, dear, your own thoughts are much more beautiful."

Percy Loring's lip lifted pettishly. "Still, my dear, we may accept a thought even from the humblest source. Sometimes in your adoration of me I'm afraid you tend to be a little narrow-minded." He handed Mildred the letter however as evidence of the greatness of his spirit even in correction. Mildred read it all and glanced up.

"How wonderful! Dear Percy, it seems almost terrible to have such power over people's lives!"

Percy replied thoughtfully: "It is a responsibility, certainly."

Mildred's great eyes were suffused with awe. "Percy, how did you ever happen to love me?" she whispered.

He patted her hand absently, opening another letter. "Because you were worthy, most dear." He threw the letter he had opened aside—it was a request for help from some charity—and picked up another handful. "A regular sheaf today. You sifted out the bills, didn't you, my dear? Yes, I see you did. That reminds me: I want you to see one I got last night, a most wonderful testimonial, almost as wonderful in its way as this one from little Ruby Smith." Percy Loring felt in his pocket, bringing out several letters which he turned over awkwardly—he had no delicacy or precision in the use of his hands. At that moment Delia knocked.

"A gentleman from Mr. Creston wid proof sheets, sir. There's something he wanted to ask you. He told me but I don't just remember the message."

Percy Loring frowned. "So does life ever intrude upon our beautiful moments! Tell him I'll see him in the hall." He turned to his wife handing her one of the letters. "Don't go till I return, my dear. Make yourself happy reading the letter."

She looked up at him with a smile as she took it; then Percy Loring left the room closing the door behind him. He had an antipathy to open doors.

Mildred bent her eager interest upon the letter, her smile still lingering; then a cloud of bewilderment seemed to pass over her face. Percy had made some mistake. He had given her the wrong letter—this was not his letter. Her eyes went back to the address at the beginning. Yes, it was his letter. It was strange that he had given it to her. Some foolish woman—some mistake. She turned it over. Some phrases caught her eye. She read on then through the first page, then flung the letter from her and sat staring at it. She covered her face with her hands. Then slowly she reached out again for it and with senses suddenly clear read it all through. She crushed it in her hand; then she opened it, smoothed it, reread it, a terrible look coming upon her face. The room went

around; then a sound brought back consciousness with a rush—the closing of the front door. She started up, ran from the room into her own, locked the door and threw herself face downward upon the bed.

At that moment Percy Loring re-entered the library with a vexed expression upon his face. Not seeing his wife he rang the bell. Delia entered, staring. She had seen the flight of her mistress, heard the turn of her lock in the door.

"Do you know where Mrs. Loring is? I left her here only an instant ago."

"I t'ink she wint into her room just now, sir. Shall I tell her?" The maid's curiosity was alert.

"No, never mind. She would probably detain me, and I am in great haste." And after a hurried fumbling among his papers Percy Loring went out, leaving Delia trying to think of a valid excuse for knocking on her mistress's door, which, her mind not being one of great activity, she had not accomplished before Mildred wearing a heavy veil came out of her room, stopping to say in a tone which the inquisitive servant recognized as unnatural: "Tell Mr. Loring when he returns that I shall be out to lunch."

This message Delia delivered with relish to the master of the house when he returned at lunch time. It was obvious to Delia that the author was not pleased. She was sure now that they had had a "fight." She told the whole story to the cook, who was disposed to sympathize with the man. Percy Loring was dyspeptic and therefore made light her labors.

After his solitary lunch the author sat down with a frown to the correction of proof sheets. This was the first time since they had been married that Mildred had foregone the rapture of a meal with him. He had not discovered the mistake that with his awkward handling and his susceptibility to confusion he had made in handing her the wrong letter at the moment of Delia's interruption, therefore he was mystified. For Mildred to have gone off leaving a message with a servant was inconceivable. His spirit was ruffled. The maid's tap at the door roused him. "How many times

have you been told not to knock when I am working!" he exclaimed irritably. The Irish girl's open mouth opened wider.

"I thought 'twas only w'en you was workin' the little machine or usin' you pen," she faltered. "Excuse me, sir."

"Well, what is it?" Percy Loring waited impatiently twirling his pencil.

"It's the Countess, sir, to see Mrs. Loring. I thought maybe you'd know when she was to be in."

"How would I know anything more than you do when it was you that gave me the message? Try to use your head a little, Delia."

"Yes, sir," Delia murmured mechanically, deep in her speculations.

"The Countess, you say," Percy Loring repeated. "Yes, of course Mrs. Loring will be home soon. Did you tell her she was not at home?"

"No, sir; I thought maybe she was, I told her. I thought she might of come back widout my seein' her."

"Just show the Countess up. And Delia—you needn't say that Mrs. Loring is not at home. The Countess is so afraid of disturbing me in my working hours. If you tell her I am alone she might hesitate to come in, and Mrs. Loring would never forgive me. Mind now, get it straight," he concluded with sufficient sharpness to jog the Irish brain into a correct delivery of the message. "Leave the door open."

He waited listening for the soft rustle of her skirt. As his ear caught the sound of her approach a smile overspread his features. But on the threshold the Countess paused.

"I mustn't disturb the author at work. I only stopped to inquire for Mildred. How is she? Is she in bed? Fair Randolph told me she was ill."

"Mildred will be here directly. It would be impossible for a visit from you to be a disturbance, Nina. Sit down."

Nina, without moving, repeated: "Is Mildred home or is she able to be out? Where is she?"

Percy Loring continued to gaze at her for a moment. In due time he said: "The Contessa is importunate. At the

moment Mildred is not at home. Didn't the maid tell you?"

Nina shook her head. "On the contrary."

"She is extraordinarily stupid. Dear Mildred is not very happy in the selection of her servants."

Nina turned to the door. "I owe you an apology for disturbing you."

Percy Loring made such haste to cross the room that he stumbled over a chair. "My dear Nina, I beg—I cannot be so misinterpreted. You asked me; I was obliged to give you a truthful answer. But you shall not deprive me of the pleasure of your company."

Nina continued to move toward the door; the sight maddened Percy Loring. "I only stopped for a moment to see if there was anything I could do. I didn't know how serious her illness might be."

Percy Loring's hands twitched, his eyes upon the indifferent woman who so stirred and baffled him. It was the first time in his life that hurt vanity had not served instantly to cool his infatuation.

"Nothing at all; a slight cold. Fair exaggerated."

"I am glad of that." She had reached the threshold. But Percy Loring was there before her. He endeavored to speak playfully. "I shall not let you go"—but it was poor acting.

"Really, Mr. Loring—"

He closed the door and stood with his back against it facing her. "I shall not let you go," he said. There was a gleam of triumph in his eyes.

For a moment she stood there looking at him. Civilized weapons were evidently of no avail against this curious gentleman. "Don't you realize that you are making yourself very objectionable? In some way difficult for me to explain—except by a curious provincial idea you have acquired of Continental life—you seem to have misunderstood me."

The color mounted up to the roots of Percy Loring's thin hair. The veins came out on his forehead, for vanity was stronger even than the attraction she had for him. "I don't misunderstand the look in your eyes. That is a thing no man misunderstands." His expres-

sion was not pleasant to see. "You have challenged me with it long enough."

Her faint change of expression was not flattering to the author. "You have a vivid imagination. I understand your leaning toward fiction—"

"A woman who has the courage to express the opinions you did to me the first time we met has the courage to live up to them. You can't fool me, Nina." In his excitement Percy's language became curiously unlitrary.

She gave him a composed look. "Open that door." She spoke without emphasis. But the look in her eyes maddened Percy Loring. Things began to swim before him. The thought crossed his mind that this excitement, this anger, was bad for him, but he was powerless against the flood.

"You know very well how to look at a man—you can take the consequences for this blowing hot and cold with me. I am not the kind of man you can treat like that—I won't sit back and take it quietly!" Then again he made a lunge at her, but she evaded him.

"How dare you? You are more despicable than I imagined! How long do you expect to keep on living a lie with poor trusting little Mildred?"

Percy Loring's eyes glittered. "Lying isn't a pretty word. In America ladies never use it, but I would forgive you anything when you look like that—"

Nina looked him over curiously. "I wonder how you dare—with your timidity on most matters!" He reddened with anger and the muscles of his jaw twitched.

"How long do you expect I will go on shielding you for Mildred's sake? Surely other women will not. I have, because I love her."

"You beautiful fiend!" cried Percy Loring, sinking at last into the phraseology of melodrama. "I'll show you—I'll—" Then he again made a dive in her direction, but she slipped from and stood opposite him, his desk between them, yet with no effect of being at bay, no fear or even agitation showing in her face, only cold contempt. And the longer he looked the hotter grew the fires of hate and passion in Percy Loring's brain.

"If you do not stop this at once," said Nina incisively, "I will tell Mildred everything. I had intended to let her believe in you as long as she could. But I will not endure this vulgar annoyance any longer. You are not the footman and I the parlor maid. You are too despicable—" Percy Loring began to be tortured with fear of being overheard.

"Hush, hush!" he cried, although the Contessa's tones were of the lowest.

"I will tell of the annoyance you gave me the night you drove me home from the golf club, even in the presence of my child."

Percy Loring's head was swimming, but the reaction of his malice upon wounded vanity was instinctive; it acted mechanically now in response. "You had the opportunity to go with Griscom. You chose me. What was I to think?"

She regarded him slowly a moment and smiled. Dense, impenetrable as was his skin of vanity, something in that look made the author writhe. It worked even against the complex ferment in his veins. He stood still leaning against the door but with dropped arms, confused, unnerved.

Nina's eyes swept him lightly. "Badly as I thought of you, you surprise me. No Italian ever misunderstood the innocence and freedom of an American girl as your morbid mind has misunderstood wholesome frankness of speech."

Percy Loring smiled in his turn. "The innocent American girl—that is different. You do not look out of your eyes like an inexperienced girl."

She regarded him with a momentary interest. "You are indeed a new type!"

Then something snapped in Percy Loring's brain. "You shall pay—you shall pay!" he stuttered. "Looking at me like that, standing there—" He grew incoherent. With a swift movement he seized her in a grip of iron. She would not have believed he was so strong. The loathing of his clasp gave her strength in her turn to evade his attempted kiss.

"Let me go—how dare you—"

Suddenly the door opened. Percy Loring released her quickly, but not

quickly enough. In the fraction of a second before she turned to look Nina had thought of Mildred, but it was not Mildred alone who stood there; Varesca was with her, and the look in his face frightened her.

"Mildred—" Percy Loring stammered weakly. And for a frozen moment Mildred stood there with her eyes upon her husband, then with a smothered cry she turned and ran down the stairs again. The Count entered the library and shut the door behind him. "You are here, then!" he said.

Percy Loring sought to recover himself; the instinct of self-preservation always strong in him rose to his assistance. The thought of Mildred buzzed confusedly through his brain. But he dismissed it. He could explain it all to Mildred. She would not blame him. He smiled, drawing down his cuffs. "He knows you!" he said to the Countess.

The Italian turned upon him. "On the contrary, I know *you*. You will explain to me later." And under that look Percy Loring's blood ran cold.

"There is nothing to explain. Your wife came here to see me, as you observe."

The Count, considering his Southern blood, spoke calmly. "Mr. Loring, you are a cad."

Percy started. "And you are a low, immoral Italian, insulting an American gentleman in his own home. I don't believe you are a count—"

Delia outside the door stood entranced, for Percy Loring's high flat tones had risen.

Under the influence of his vulgarity the Count curiously cooled. He spoke almost as quietly as his wife had done. "We will settle this later. It is not for this moment."

"Evidently you are not aware of the way your wife spends her time when you are away—writing letters to men asking them to come to see her—telling them that she is alone." Percy Loring was white now; his face was working uncontrollably.

"You lie," said the Count quietly staring at him. His face was also white

and Nina saw that his clenched hands trembled.

Percy Loring choked. "Ask her—ask her—and see. A letter to Griscom—I saw it on her desk—telling him that you were away—"

Nina laid her hand on her husband's arm. "Mr. Loring did read a letter that he found torn in two on my desk and has already made up a story about it to Mildred to save himself from disagreeable consequences."

Percy Loring smiled with unsteady lips. "So—you see—you can hardly hold me responsible, Count. You see I am only one of—"

The Count stood staring at him for a moment. Then he struck him in the face with his glove. "You lie; you are a coward," he said. "Do you think I believe my wife would waste so much as a smile on you? Do you think *you* could make me suspect her? I followed her here to protect her against your annoyance."

Percy Loring laughed hysterically. "Leave my house! We are not used to such loud scenes. Remember you are in a gentleman's house."

"The Contessa was obviously in all haste to leave when I entered," returned the Count. "Now that I have come she is able to do so."

He opened the door, almost falling over the Irish girl in the hall, who was unprepared for so sudden a termination to the delectable interview.

Percy Loring fell back in a chair breathing hard. He passed his hand over his damp brow. These experiences were terribly aging. He must be careful; bad for the heart, too. He rose, poured out some sherry with a shaking hand and sank back in the chair closing his eyes.

In the cab Mario buried his face in his hands without speaking. Nina laid a gentle hand on his shoulder, but he shook himself free without anger. Suddenly he turned, catching her with both arms.

"Look at me," he commanded her. "Tell me the truth."

"Mario dear, I thought you understood."

"Tell me the truth."

"Have I ever told you anything else?"

"I don't know. You are a woman."

He looked steadily into her eyes; she met them fearlessly.

"And you are an Italian," she said sadly; "you can't understand."

She felt the hand that held her arm shake. The sweat gathered on his brow. He rested his elbow on his knees and buried his face in his hands.

"He had been making love to you. I saw his face, your hair, when I came in."

"If my hair was disheveled it was because I was trying to escape from him."

"Did he kiss you?"

"He tried to." A savage exclamation escaped him. "Mario, I loathe him, I despise him—you know that."

"One never knows the ways of woman and love—" He repeated his Italian creed as an Arab might quote a fatalistic sentence from the Koran. There it lay at the bottom of his mind as she had known it did—the Latin's fundamental distrust of woman. Woman to him was and must ever be a creature of whim, of impulse. Love, as he understood it, was dissociated from mind—the matter of a trick of an eyelash, the turn of a lock, the sound of a voice. He conceived of love therefore as a lightning that might strike in any place, even the most unlikely.

"Look at me—do you love any man?"

"Mario, you know I have been true to you. That is more than you can say to me."

Something in her words seemed to work within him. He stood staring at her. "You have always been true to me—*Dio*, what do you mean by that? You are keeping something back. You mean that you have been true to me but that you love some other man, some man I do not even know of perhaps. I believe I have always known it would happen. That letter that you wrote—"

"It was nothing. I will tell you all about it. I didn't send it. I was lonely. You were away—He got up to the apartment unannounced and found it on my desk. I didn't see him. I didn't send the letter. It was all as I have told you." He lowered the carriage window. "Mario, what are you going to do?"

"Get out," he answered briefly.

"But why—where are you going?"

Mario, don't leave me now, don't leave me—I need you!"

He turned quickly. "You love me?"

"You know it."

He stared in her eyes again as if to tear away the veil to her innermost heart. Under that look her eyes dropped. He smiled then and shook his head.

"I do not call that love," he said. He put his head out of the window and commanded the driver to stop. He turned to her. "Don't wait for me. I shall not be home to dinner."

"Mario dear, don't—don't do anything foolish. You make me so unhappy. I will wait for you to come back. Come back soon—please—"

He stood a moment looking at her through the cab door, a long strange look that, used as she was to his impulses, his violences, for an instant struck terror into her heart.

"*A rivederci, bellissima*," he said and smiled a strange smile not like Mario. Then he gave her address to the driver and was gone.

XVI

THE next day she rose early, depressed, fatigued yet restless. She had left Paolo, in charge of Assunta, with his great-aunt in the country. She spent the morning shopping. At lunch time she telephoned to the hotel to find if the Count had returned. He had neither returned nor sent any message. There was nothing in that fact to disturb her. It had happened several times before. It was because her nervous resistance was exhausted, she told herself. She must not let her nerves get the best of her. Yet after lunch she decided to telephone for Paolo, and after a long tiresome wait managed to get long-distance connection with her uncle. His tones sounded far away and unnatural. She caught however, the word "accident," and her thoughts flew to Mario. She waited panic-stricken for his next words. "Nothing serious." She managed to make out that much. "Railroad—power house—trains held up—everything late—better tomorrow."

She remembered now seeing some headlines about delayed trains in an evening paper. She hung up the receiver with a sinking heart. Something had got hold of her nerves. She had a feeling that she must see her child that instant. Yet if there were likely to be delays in the journey—she did not want at this critical moment to be away if Mario should return. She did not want to go home. She decided that she would go to see Jane Worthing, and hailing a taxicab started off. The man, reckless and not too expert, whizzed wildly about among vehicles and around corners. At one crossing they narrowly escaped running against a man. It was an open cab permitting an unimpeded outlook—she saw in the swift instant of passing that the man was Griscom. She called the chauffeur to a halt sharply. Griscom, who had recognized her, came up.

"Did you stop to apologize for not running over me?"

She gave him her hand. "The chauffeur is apparently bent on manslaughter. But you seem to be unscathed."

"It was my fault. I don't often go to sleep on corners." His eyes searched her. She was conscious of something different about him, something tense, disturbed. "How are you? You are not looking so awfully fit."

"I have been worrying," she admitted.

"I didn't know you did that."

"I don't often. This is just a bit of maternal folly. I left Paolo up in the country and was seized with a sudden homesick longing for him. I telephoned Uncle Wilfred to have him sent down, and he says that there had been an accident on the New Haven road that has upset all the train schedules, and that I had better not have him take the journey."

He glanced at her. "It will only be a temporary tie-up. He can get in tomorrow. I think it is better not to attempt it today. Paolo might not like being blocked an hour or so in the tunnel this hot spring weather. But he could come in in a machine all right. I wonder they didn't think of that."

"They would think I was crazy if I

suggested it. You know their dear old cut-and-dried ways. I don't believe they ever bring their cars into New York. Of course one's friends always ask one to make use of their motors, but I never feel quite like taking them up on it, and the expense of a cab out there and back would be too much folly to indulge myself in."

She was not a woman to talk out her worries, and she stopped herself then with a smile. "How tiresome I am! But I feel better having maundered into a sympathetic ear. Can't I take you to your destination?"

"Thank you, no. Will you be at home the latter part of the afternoon?"

"Yes." She wondered if he intended to come and see her, but without any further explanation he said good-bye and she told the man to go on.

On her return from a quiet little visit with Jane Worthing she found a note from Mario written in Italian and dated from a club. "I am going up to Beachlands for a day or two. I shall spend most of my time at the yacht club learning to paddle a canoe. I am still sad but soon you shall hear good news of me."

She pondered a moment over the Italian sententiousness of those last words, then dismissed any sense of uneasiness they gave her. It was five o'clock. Perhaps Griscom would come. She went to the mirror, and not pleased with what she saw there, decided to change her gown. A second and stronger impulse caused her to reverse her decision and turn from the glass after a few repairing touches to her hair.

At that moment the bell of the apartment rang. She hesitated a moment with a beating heart. It must be Mario. Griscom would not come up unannounced. She moved slowly to the door and opened it, to see Assunta smiling and beside her a small bundled-up figure that flew into her arms.

"Paolo!" she cried. "How did you get here?"

"Mr. Griscom brought us!" Paolo was alive with happy excitement. "He came after us in a car and brought us down. Such a lovely ride! Mother dear, don't you love Mr. Griscom—"

She released the child, retaining his hand. "He is very good to us, is he not, *piccino*? Come, we will have supper together in the nursery."

XVII

THE next morning she met Maddox at a picture exhibition. He had a catalogue in his hand, upon the margin of which he was making pencil notes. His smooth brow was corrugated with an important frown.

"You don't look as if you were enjoying the pictures," she remarked.

He rubbed his forehead. "This thinking of something to say about each one—such a bore! Can't settle down to just enjoying what you like."

"It seems like a peaceful receptive occupation, writing about pictures."

Maddox looked dissatisfied. "Dead slow and that's the truth. Trying to please your friends—keep square with 'em all and yet have a fling at the truth now and then. I tell you, I envy Griscom—off to Turkey—real thing. Something doing. Spice of danger."

She looked at his trivial face, the short nose, the inexpressive mouth, thought of Griscom's square jaw and smiled inwardly.

Maddox sighed. "Yes, he's off for glory and adventure. And I'm here reeling off jargon about values, brush work, *chiaro-scuro*—"

The Countess glanced up quickly, then fixed her attention upon a landscape done in smoky blues. "Off, you say? He isn't gone—he was here yesterday."

Maddox nodded. "Yes, but he won't be tomorrow! He got his walking orders yesterday. Didn't you see the morning paper? There's really something doing over there now."

The room seemed to go around, a confusion of gold frames and bizarre colors. She stared steadily at the canvas, and Maddox glanced at her wondering, but such slight traces of her inner condition as might be discernible were not obvious to the crude perceptions of a Maddox. He ran on in his narrative, for Griscom as a subject had the fascination for him

that the doings of the big man often have for the small.

"Yes, he didn't know till yesterday noon. Then he had some business or other out of town. I know he took the chief's machine, and had to work all night on some morning stuff to make up for it, and only has today to get ready in. Boat sails tomorrow. Crowded hour, all right, but it's life," Maddox concluded with a sigh.

She left him a little abruptly, Maddox thought afterwards, yet not in a way that seemed striking enough to be significant. "Those girls that buy titles think they can put on that kind of airs," Maddox comforted himself for the briefness with which she had cut short his request to be asked in at tea time. After all, she had urged him to come.

She went out in the street not knowing which way she turned. An uptown Fifth Avenue 'bus stood at the corner and she got in. She scarcely noticed the crowding elbows, the bungling jostlings of large women and oblivious self-centered girls. There was only one thing clear in her mind: she must see him before he left—just once she must see him. She got off at her corner, then, reflecting that she did not wish to take the hotel employees into her confidence, turned down a side street and telephoned at a public station in a drug store. He was not at his apartment. The telephone boy thought he was "down at the paper." She called the newspaper office up next, and after some skillful manipulation of the telephone girl, who wanted her name spelled but couldn't understand it when she had done so, she heard his voice. He had come to the telephone without knowing who was at the other end, she knew by his quick tone of business—quiet, slightly imperative, without discourtesy—a tone that changed quickly at the sound of her name.

"I was just trying to get you," he said.

"To tell me you hadn't time to say good-bye?"

"To ask when I might see you."

"At any time, at your convenience—naturally."

"About half past five—six?"

"If you want to change it, don't hesitate. I shall be home."

He thanked her. "But I shall not change it," and hung up the receiver.

It was only lunch time. She had the afternoon before her, four hours at least before she should see him. For the last time perhaps. Suppose he could not come! Something might prevent him. Such work was like a soldier's orders. He would put work before her, she knew that. She *must* see him; she couldn't bear it if she did not. She sent Paolo out with Assunta. She prayed that Mario would not return. She must have this hour, this moment alone with him before the end came. She paced the room striving with her characteristic instinct to be calm, reasonable, to smother her impulses, to school herself to act as she would wish afterwards to have acted.

The telephone bell rang sharply and her heart leaped up with a shock that took her breath. It was to tell her that he could not come—to postpone it. She thought only of him. She had forgotten Mario. She took up the receiver with a hand that shook uncontrollably. The office clerk announced "Mrs. Loring" through the telephone. "*Mrs. Loring?*" She emphasized the title interrogatively to be quite sure. Receiving assurance in the clerk's repetition, she said: "Tell her to come up." It would be over an hour before Griscom could come. It would help pass the time, keep her sane. Mildred did not make long calls. Then she wondered indifferently why she was coming. For the moment the episode in the author's library had been blotted from her mind but the minute that she saw her cousin's face she remembered it. Mildred came up to her, seizing her hands as she had not since their first meeting. "Oh, Nina, can you ever forgive me?"

Nina drew her to a seat. "For what, dear?"

"About Percy. You know I saw. I understand now—everything."

Nina did not reply, wondering if there was any way of postponing the blow of utter disillusionment. Mildred went on: "It wasn't only what I saw. It was a

letter, too. I can't tell you about it. He handed it to me by mistake—that morning. I can never go back to him."

"Never? You may not keep on feeling that way. I have stayed with Mario."

"He didn't lie to you every day of his life."

"He would have probably if I hadn't accepted the situation. He did at first until I removed the necessity by letting him go his own way and live his own life."

"But he is so terribly in love with you. Everyone can see it—"

"There is always one woman that such a man loves most. The majority of Italian men indulge in intrigues—at least, I am accustomed to seeing that state of affairs about me."

"It is hideous. I couldn't accept such a degraded life. Besides, I don't love him any more. The man I loved isn't even dead. He never was." Mildred stared ahead of her bewildered, miserable.

Nina sought to detach herself from her own disturbed emotional undercurrent and focus upon her cousin's situation.

"One cannot take decisive steps in an instant, dear."

"I don't know where to go. If only father were alive!"

"Poor little Milly! Stay with me until you know what you want to do."

"I can't stay here in a hotel—people would know."

"Lie down in my room a little while. You are worn out."

Mildred let her cousin lead her into her bedroom, take off her hat and coat and draw down the shades.

"Do you want me to stay and talk with you, dear, or would you rather be alone?" Nina waited standing at her side.

Mildred hesitated. "I will stay quiet here a little while. I want to think. I was with Jane last night. I was ashamed to come to you, and I would have had to explain so to anyone else. But I didn't sleep. Today I went out and walked miles in the park, and I met Harold Wright and he insisted upon talking about how Percy's books had helped him. Oh, Nina, at that moment—"

"Poor little Milly, I know. You must rest. Would you like some tea?"

Mildred shook her head. As her cousin was at the door she spoke again. "Nina, do you think that makes any difference—that his books, Percy's books have done good?"

"In your judgment of him, you mean?" Mildred nodded. "I don't know, dear. It means that the ideal that he recognizes is good. It is sort of a twisted-up problem of good and evil. I wouldn't think about it now. Just try to let yourself relax and go to sleep."

She closed the door softly and went back to the reception room. She glanced at the clock; it was half past four. As she did so the telephone rang again. The voice at the other end, evidently a servant, inquired if Mrs. Loring was there. It was the Loring's chauffeur. Nina managed to learn his identity, and from the incoherent message made out that an accident had happened to Mr. Loring.

"A serious accident?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, I'm afraid. Doctor here . . . and nurse. Attacked . . . in the woods . . . all night . . . and we can't find Mrs. Loring—"

"Mrs. Loring is here," she told the man. "She is not feeling well. I will tell her at once. Will you see if the doctor or the nurse can come to the telephone a moment?"

"I'll see, ma'am." She waited some time; then a collected feminine voice addressed her. Mr. Loring's injuries did not seem to be serious, the nurse explained. On the other hand, one could never tell. He had been attacked in the woods taking the short cut to the station, by some Italians, he thought. He had caught cold, having been there some time before anyone found him, and was very nervous from the shock. He was most anxious that the thing shouldn't get in the papers, and he had been constantly asking for Mrs. Loring.

"I will tell her at once," Nina responded.

She went to her room, knocked lightly on the door and entered. She found Mildred lying with wide-open eyes upon

the chintz-covered divan. "How long since you have been home, Mildred?"

"Not since yesterday afternoon."

"Chapman has just telephoned that Percy has been hurt. They have been trying to find you."

Mildred stared at her. "Do you mean that he is dead?"

"No."

"Will he die?"

"I don't believe so. But you will go to him. You must go to him now, whether you stay or not, to keep people from talking."

"They will have something to talk about soon enough."

"I think you had better go, dear. The circumstances just now would make it so very sensational if you refuse."

"If he were dying I would go. There is someone to take care of him."

"There is a nurse of course. I have just been talking with her."

"How did it happen? What happened?"

"Someone attacked him as he was walking through the woods from the country club. He was on his way to the train. He had been there some time when they found him. He was only slightly hurt they think, but he got chilled and frightened. You never can tell about such things."

"Who did it?"

"They don't know. Thieves, toughs, I suppose."

"Or some man who—" She did not finish. The thought had turned her white. "How hideous—and a man like that could save Harold Wright's soul!"

"We never know how we fit into the pattern of other people's lives."

"I suppose you are right," Mildred said after a silence. "I should go now to avoid the unpleasantness of publicity. Then—I suppose—if anything should happen, I would wish I had."

"I am sure you would."

"But how can I stand it to see him again?"

"You can stand it." And at that moment, looking into her cousin's eyes, Mildred felt like an untried child.

At the door she turned and kissed her.

"Dear Nina, you have been so good, when I—"

"Don't think of that any more, dear."

XVIII

MILDRED was gone. It was after five. Griscom should be here soon now. She paced the floor. She leaned out the window trying to imagine that she could discern his figure among the passing crowd. Then again the telephone bell rang. It lacked ten minutes of the half-hour, but taking up the receiver she learned that it was he. She must control this trembling, she must not let go. She gave the order for him to come up. Her voice sounded strange in her ears. He was there at the door. Assunta, who had returned a few minutes before with Paolo, appeared to answer the ring.

"It is Mr. Griscom," her mistress stopped her to explain. "I expect him." And so Assunta, having admitted him, returned without announcing him to the apartment she shared with Paolo.

She was standing in the middle of the room as he came toward her. She noted that he looked grave but collected. He had been concentrated upon affairs while she had been waiting. She put out both hands. To his eyes she seemed as usual, a little paler perhaps, but she smiled.

"Really going this time?"

He held her hands an instant. "Really going."

She sank into a chair with her back to the window. "Turkey seems rather far away," she said. There was a strange note in her voice, she was conscious of it; he, too, perhaps, for he glanced up quickly, and rising from the seat he had taken turned abruptly and looked out the window.

"The world cannot put you farther away or bring you nearer," he said at last.

She made a quick movement. "You were so good, so kind about Paolo." She did not look at him. "How can I thank you—to take all that trouble—when you were so busy—just for a selfish whim of mine—"

"It was not a selfish whim."

She contrived a ghost of her light smile then. "If it had been, you would not have gratified it?"

"I am afraid I would just then. You see—I knew I was going."

She rose with some pretense of adjusting the curtain. "And you had to work all night to make up for it, I know. I can't bear to think of it. You mustn't do things like that, Dan—" She broke off, unable to command coherent utterance. She pressed the back of her hand to her lips.

She had called him by his first name. He stared, shocked, moved, bewildered. She mastered herself with an effort. "Why are we standing like this? I am not hospitable." She sat down. He took a chair opposite.

"Habit, I suppose; I haven't sat down all day." Then there was a silence.

"Do you know—did you know that Percy Loring had been hurt?" She spoke first.

"Hurt? Seriously? How?"

"Attacked in the Beachland woods. They didn't know how serious it might be. But I am sure it isn't. Men like Percy Loring don't die."

"Poor little Mildred!" he said. "Perhaps it would be better for her if he could die without her finding him out."

"I don't know how much finding him out would hurt her in the end. Mildred is so immature. There is so much childish idealism and sentimentality in her feeling for her husband. It doesn't seem as if it could be a real grown-up love—" Their eyes met and glanced away.

"Do they know who did it?" Griscom asked.

"It was what you call a hold-up, I imagine. They suspect some Italian desperadoes in the neighborhood. The poor Italians—they seem to be made responsible for most of the crimes committed in America."

"Italians are more likely to kill for love or revenge than money, are they not?"

"It is an accepted fiction—I don't think they do so often except in the South."

"What a horrible person he is!" she went on to fill the silence. "To think that little Mildred should have married a man like that. Why, he came to see me every day for a week, then told Mildred that I had been pursuing him. He even read a letter on my writing desk—a letter I had written to you and never sent—and told Mildred and Mario about it, trying to make out that I—"

He turned sharply, interrupting her. "A letter you had written to me—"

"Asking you to come and see me—one evening when I was alone—and—unable to amuse myself."

"And you didn't send it—why?"

"I thought better of it."

"When was it?"

"The evening after that night we heard 'Bohème.'"

He rose again. "If I had only kept my head— It is terrible to think of your wanting me and being afraid to send for me—because of that—"

"It wasn't you—your losing your head—that I was afraid of."

She had risen also. She turned to him; the look in her face took away his breath. "Dan, you are going tomorrow—" she began and stopped.

"Tomorrow."

"There is danger, isn't there?"

"I suppose there is always a little."

"Sit down there." She indicated a chair. "I'll sit here. I want to tell you something before you go. Promise me not to come nearer or I can't say it—we may never see each other again. You promise?"

"I promise."

"It is this—I love you. I want you to know—if you don't already—the way you love me. I can't stand it to have you go away and not know."

"Nina!" He rose to his feet, then sat down again breathing hard. The sound in his voice had set her trembling.

"I loved you in Switzerland without quite knowing or understanding. It was so different from the way I had loved Mario. That is why I wouldn't drive home with you that day from the golf club. What you had said—just before that—had almost undone me—then your hand touched mine when we stood

at the door—you remember—I couldn't trust myself. And that is why I didn't send that letter. I was punished for writing it, in another way. But it would have hurt me more if I had sent it. I want to keep my love for you free from—above all weakness. Oh, Dan, I want this minute so terribly to take your head between my hands as if you were Paolo—and pray—pray that no harm will come to you. But I dare not. Help me—don't come near me—it is the only safe way—"

He took a step toward her, then stood still.

"You ask almost more than I can stand. To hear you say such things—not to go near you—when my love for you is—choking me!"

She shut her eyes. "I must stay with Mario and the children—I shall stay with them; nothing, nothing can change me about that."

For one blinding instant their eyes met. "Oh, Nina," he cried, "just once!"

She drew back in terror. "No, no, you mustn't touch me! You must keep your word, Dan."

For a moment they looked into each other's eyes, and he saw her face as he had never seen it—with all its subtleties, its inhibitions of civilization swept away—the face of the real woman. And as they stood so the bell rang. She took a step mechanically in the direction of the door. She pressed her hands against her eyes. "Was it the telephone?" She spoke like one only partly conscious.

"I think it was the bell of the apartment," he answered in an uncertain voice.

She moved slowly toward the door, striving to gather together her scattered forces. It was Mario perhaps. How could she meet him at this moment? Halfway to the door she paused. "Dan—what shall I do?" But for once the man of resource had no power to respond. Assunta appeared.

"Is the signora at home?" she asked.

"Not to visitors." The Countess turned her face from the girl's scrutiny.

Griscom went to the window and looked into the darkening street. In the center of the room Nina Varesca

waited. She heard the door open and listened for her husband's familiar step but did not hear it. Assunta entered with a note on a tray. It was addressed in Mario's writing. A short reprieve, then. She held it, remotely wondering if she should open it. News of his delayed return, or perhaps announcing it. She had better open it. She pressed the button turning on the light and broke open the envelope. The next moment he heard her give a smothered cry. He turned quickly. "What is it?"

She was staring at the letter. "Mario—it can't be true!"

"What is it?" She swayed uncertainly. He moved toward her but she raised her hand warding him off and sank into a chair still staring like one in a dream at the letter.

"It can't be true!" she said.

"Your husband," he said; "something has happened?"

"Something! He has—killed himself."

XIX

THROUGH the storm that surged in his brain, the trained instinct of the journalist automatically worked after a moment. "But the letter is from him?" She nodded. "He may not have actually done it. Italians threaten—isn't that so? It may not have happened."

"He went out in a boat on the river, a canoe—to make it seem an accident. When he had gone that far he would not turn back. I know him." She covered her face with her hands, shaking from head to foot. He stood watching her in stunned silence. Suddenly she looked up. "Dan, I can trust you. I cannot stand it alone. It was he that tried to kill Percy Loring. That is why I know he has done this. He wasn't himself. He thought I cared for Percy Loring, my poor foolish boy. I tried, Dan—God knows I tried to make him happy! I can't bear it—Mario, Mario!" Her face went down on her arms.

Her suffering pierced him with a two-edged sword. "Then you loved him after all?" he said.

"Yes—I loved him—he was the father

of my boys. He was my oldest child. You are not a woman—you can't understand."

"But he did not love you like a son."

"The poor boy! If he had only understood—"

He whitened. "Understood—that you loved him?"

"That he had nothing to fear."

His personal torment was too keen. He had to put her to the test even in that hour. "If what you have said was not a mere passing emotion caused by the thought of my love for you, my going away—and all that—he only made a mistake in the man. You do love someone else—or isn't it true?"

She looked at him with tragic eyes. "If he could only have understood that I would have stayed with him always—even though I love you as I do, Dan!"

He was ashamed then. "He couldn't have borne that. No man could."

"Couldn't he? A woman could."

"No, he is happier out of it."

She shook her head in a fresh access of anguish. "No, no—he loved life so—my poor boy. Please go, Dan."

He looked about helplessly. "How can I leave you like this? There are things to be done. I can't let anyone else do them."

His unconscious authority, although she loved him, hurt her cruelly in that moment. "No; someone else must do them. Can't you understand—"

"You are sorry you said it. You would take it back if you could—"

"Oh, Dan, how cruel men are! Of course, of course, I wish I hadn't said it! How could I help but wish it now? I have borne it so long, and now in this hour, this terrible hour, I let go—I don't just wish I had not said it; I wish it were not true—"

"Nina!" He drew back as if from a blow. She hid her face, repeating. "Please go."

"I may see you again a moment, a second?"

She shook her head. "Not now—when you come back."

There was always the chance that he might not come back. But he did not remind her. He was capable of that un-

selfishness at least, even in the supreme selfishness of love.

He picked up a fold of her gown and pressed it to his lips. "Good-bye," he whispered, and in another moment he was gone.

For a long time after he had gone she sat motionless. Then she picked up the letter and reread it.

When you read this I shall be at the bottom of the river. I went out in a canoe which I bought for the purpose, far up the river. It will read as an accident. I remember your American hatred of what you call melodrama. I know now that you do not love him. I shook the truth from him before I left him—whether dead or alive I do not know or care. If alive he will never tell, for his god is public opinion. I know now that you do not love me and never will. That is all that matters. I cannot escape from you anywhere, yet I am farthest away when you are close beside me. You are never so far as when I hold you in my arms. Such a thing a man cannot stand and live; death is the only escape. If it is not Percy Loring or another man it is only a question of time. You are a woman who *can* love—*Dio*, do I not remember how you can love!—and it will be one of your own race. Do you remember that proverb of the peasants: "One should choose his wife and his cow in his own country?"

Va bene, my Nina. After all, I can die now knowing that you have been mine only. It is something to send a man to his death for love of you when you have been his wife for nine years. I believe ours is a unique love story of Italy.

Yours in death,

MARIO.

The letter fell from her; she buried her face in her hands. "Mario, Mario,

why did you do it?" He had been her first love after all, the love of her youth. A flood of memories poured over her.

She rose, turned off the light and went to the window. The lights hung in glittering points over the river. She sank down on the floor staring out and shivered. It was so cold, that dark water, so cold; and he loved the sunshine, sunshine and happiness. Assunta appeared at the door, curious.

"The Contessa is alone in the dark." She touched the electric button.

"No, no; put it out," the Countess commanded. "I don't want the light." The Italian girl obeyed quickly, wondering. "Send the Signorino Paolo to me," her mistress spoke out of the darkness.

"The Contino is here."

The child ran into the room, then paused, feeling his way toward her. "It is all dark. Why are you alone in the dark, mother? Is Mr. Griscom gone?"

"Yes, he is gone."

"I didn't see him to say good-bye. And will he come back?"

She did not answer. The child stood beside her wondering. "And papa—is he not home yet? When will he come?"

He reached out his hand for her cheek. "Mother—" She caught the child in her arms and buried her face in his hair as the storm shook her. "Oh, Paolo, Paolo, my child, how can I tell you—how can I ever tell you?"



"DO your writings bring you any returns?"
"Alas, yes."



"I'M very sorry, madam, but those were two-day eggs."
"They smelt more like decade eggs."

THE WOMAN, THE GIRL AND TWO MEN

By H. CHERITON HILGATE

PAUL generally comes and smokes a friendly pipe with me when he gets leave for a day or two.

Not that I smoke—the habit is not yet generally adopted by middle-aged aunts—but I always let him light me a cigarette, and I hold it between my fingers as professionally as I can and just keep it alight, because he says it helps him to talk and makes him forget the fifteen years' difference in our ages.

Though no one would have believed that day that Paul was only twenty-two. The change in him struck me first as I stood just inside the hall door watching him stamp off great lumps of snow and finally emerge, looking in his heavy military coat like a man of years and experience instead of a mere infant.

In spite of having a nephew in "the Service" I have never succeeded in picking up military phrases and turns of speech, as I observe that so many people do nowadays when their second cousin's brother-in-law has wriggled into the militia and thus enabled them to claim connection with the army and an intimate knowledge of all matters military.

When Englishmen become great enough to insist on compulsory universal service we shall have more patriotism and less snobbery than we have today. But this is beside the point. The thing is, I cannot even remember the military expressions for everyday use—except that I know "mess" means meals—so I shall be sure to put into Paul's mouth words which he probably would disown in wrath. And I herewith apologize in advance.

That evening we pulled our chairs up to the fire directly after dinner, and Paul lighted my cigarette for me as usual, and we agreed that we were thankful to be indoors and not out in April's record snowstorm; and goodness knows how we drifted from that to leap year, but we did.

"But it's not entirely rubbish," remarked Paul, too gravely, I thought, considering that the subject was frivolous to the point of vulgarity. "Behind all this nonsense of women doing the proposing lie some very pretty problems, and I can vouch for at least one which is fairly near the region of tragedy."

"Stuff and nonsense!" I said easily, for the more the boy feels anything, the less does he appreciate sympathy. One has to be very diplomatic when one is an aunt.

"It's only the lower classes," I went on, "who keep up leap year traditions, and they aren't much worried with problems. It's simply a silly old joke."

Paul looked at the end of his cigarette and then at me.

"You, as a writer woman, would give your eyes to know a story I know," he said.

"Why don't you write it yourself, then?" I asked, for he is apt to accuse himself of "dabbling in literature"—his words; and I believe he does get half-guinea prizes for anecdotes now and then—when he's not on parade, or dining here and there, or arguing with his tailor, or otherwise indulging in

those varied occupations to which a subaltern refers as "work."

"It wouldn't be safe; but *you* may—that is if you'll give me your word of honor never to let a syllable of it go any further, except as copy."

I gave the required pledge, and Paul merely paused to fill a pipe and then began.

I try to report him verbatim, but, as I said, I won't be responsible for the accuracy of any military jargon.

"There's a fellow in the Battery, named Holroyd, just got his majority—just you change the names as I go along, Aunt Agatha, and then it'll be all right—and he's about the straightest beggar I know and tremendously popular, in spite of the sort he is. He's a frightfully keen officer—in fact, a bit too set on work for me. He goes in for religion and that sort of thing, you know, but without being a bit offensive. Well, some people are! Girls go simply wild about him, chiefly, I think, because he doesn't take the least notice of them; and the rum part is, he never seems to see it. He steers clear of all that sort of tackle, and, indeed, it was only just after Christmas, one day at tea at Lady Murchison's—they're great friends of Holroyd's—that everyone was chaffing round, and he said quite soberly that he'd never been able to fall in love in his life. He looked quite serious when he said it, and, somehow, nobody laughed, though we were all rotting like anything; and that was the first time I noticed about—well, about the woman."

"Who is the woman?" I asked.

"Don't interrupt, or I can't tell it properly. She's a friend of the Camerons; they'd brought her to tea, and no one knew any more about her than that, except that she often stayed with them and was evidently jolly hard up.

"She's quite ordinary as to looks, but two things I always noticed about her; one was the extraordinary stillness that always seems to belong to her, even when she's laughing and joking, and the other was the directness of her sayings and her eyes.

"I don't know what made me look at her when Holroyd said he'd never had

any 'experiences,' but she seemed, somehow, the person to look at—and, after all, that's rot. He had been staring at the fire as he spoke, but then he turned, almost involuntarily, and I caught them exchanging quite a long, *interested* look. I felt sort of as if I'd had no business to see it, though there was absolutely nothing in it. It was the look of people just aware of each other's presence.

"Holroyd went almost directly, and she didn't seem even to notice that he was gone.

"She's one of those women who are just ripping good fellows, ready to be friendly and jolly—and awfully understanding. I must say, she was just as decent as she could be to all of us, and made no difference, except that she perhaps took less notice of Holroyd than of anyone else. She never seemed even to see when he came into the room, though if young Murchison did—or I, for instance—she'd look round and smile and nod at once.

"I never saw two people ignore each other as Holroyd and this woman did. If he spoke to her, she answered with such easy indifference that I used to feel quite sorry for him; and if she spoke first to him, he'd get quite grave and answer her in the stiffest way. Funny, lofty manner, he has.

"I think it was about a fortnight after that day that I went with the Camerons to a rather good concert at Weymouth, and I suddenly noticed Holroyd. He was staring at Miss Thingummy as if she were the prettiest actress ever photographed, though all he could see of her was the back of her head and shoulders and one ear and the curve of her cheek. His mouth was quite tightly shut and his eyes were extraordinarily alight, and I thought: 'So you're on, too, my boy!' Of course she must have had heaps of fellows crazy about her!

"As I watched him, she looked round, and—this shows you the sort she is—she didn't blush or anything silly or turn away: she simply met his gaze with one clear and grave and childlike, and then turned back to young Murchi-

son and apparently forgot Holroyd's existence.

"Well, I kept an eye on h—them after that. He was always looking at her and she hardly seemed to see him. Sometimes she looked at him, but quite casually, and they'd both promptly forget each other again.

"Then one day there was that huge lecture on Egypt by Lord Farmingham—the mummy man, you know; his place is close to Dorchester—and I was there early and thought I'd get some definite information. Holroyd came in and took up his stand by the wall just under those hideous old Farmingham portraits, where he could watch the door. What's *he* like? Oh, he's rather big and rather broad and a bit heavy, though thin. He's first rate with kids. Oh, and he says the funniest things without turning a hair; only his eyes seem to see the joke.

"He didn't look as if he were waiting and watching, of course, and he chatted with various people as one naturally would. But the minute the Cameron party came in he knew it, for his skin got so dark—you know the queer color those sallow fellows turn! Well, he had some luck. He'd got himself planted just in the way, and as Miss—as she moved by just under his shoulders, he looked down at her and she up at him—a glance, that was all, but she got perfectly white and then flushed up all over as they moved into their seats. It made her look jolly nice—not pretty, exactly, but lovely.

"Well, *there* was a difference, wasn't there? She used not to blush when she first knew him.

"Holroyd took a place in front of them to their left, and there was one of those huge, long mirrors exactly opposite, so he simply stared through this at her the whole evening, while she, still with that divine color, was absorbed in the lecture. And jolly dry stuff it was, too; I couldn't listen to a word."

Paul tapped his pipe irritably on the arm of his chair and said, "I beg your pardon," absently.

Then he continued, rather argumentatively, though I had said nothing.

"Yet, afterward, when everyone was having tea in the hall, she chatted away casually to any other Johnny there, without so much as a look toward Holroyd. I simply couldn't make it out. All right; wait, dear—I'm getting to the point.

"I didn't see her for some time, and then one Sunday I was in church—yes, I *do* go to church as a rule; why not? No, well, I dare say I didn't, but one can change one's mind. Besides, she's the sort of woman that jolly well makes you feel you might do worse than that—and might be better than you are; and I happened to be exactly behind her, and old Holroyd was on duty for the second lesson. It was the one about— Oh, well, that doesn't matter. Anyhow, again and again, while he was reading—and he isn't bad at that sort of show—he raised his eyes and looked straight at her and then back at the Bible. When he got to the 'Here endeth' arrangement, he looked up—I never saw the thing better done—swept the church casually with his glance, just as if he were expecting to catch one of the troop asleep, and finally let it rest deliberately on her.

"I think he must have caught her eyes, for his simply blazed. Even at that distance I saw them sort of leap forward, and his lips parted. Then he was back in his place and that was all; but when she knelt down her chair just shook and clattered like chattering teeth.

"Now comes the part I'm ashamed of—and yet I'm not, though I feel I ought to be.

"I turned up at Holroyd's quarters one evening and banged on his door, and hearing nothing, I went in. It was quite dark—the room, I mean—so I was feeling my way to the fire, which was nearly out, to stir it up and wait till he came back, when a voice I simply didn't recognize, said, 'Who's that?' It gave me the jumps, it was such an uncanny voice, till I saw in the dim, red glow that it was the old fellow himself sitting at his writing table with his back to me and his head on his hands.

"I said, 'Sorry; it's only I. Why the

dickens didn't you light up?' and I took out my matches.

"'Let it alone,' he said queerly, 'and clear out.'

"I said, 'Right-o,' or something, and felt my way back to the door, and there stopped with my back to him to explain that I wanted some papers I'd lent him a week back.

"'I'll send them round tonight,' he said irritably. 'My head's splitting.'

"I went; and I wondered if it had anything to do with Fr—the woman, as you call her.

"Though we were such pals, Holroyd and I, somehow I could never, for the life of me, get a word out about her to him.

"At about eleven my man brought me in an envelope, and I opened it. Well, of course I ought to have sent it straight back. But I read it. That's where I was such an unspeakable cad; but that's how I know!

"The letter was from a girl, and a jolly nice girl, lovely and sweet and different from the ordinary girl as lilies from dandelions; but she's young, oh d—I mean idiotically young. She's the daughter of one of the richest men in England and a duke, too.

"I'll tell you the letter. You *are* a good sort, Aunt Agatha. It's about the only thing I ever learned by heart in my life; and I did it then at one reading. A dear little fist she writes, too, that girl, and her pure little soul peeped out in every blessed word of that damned letter. Sometimes I'd give all I've got to forget it. It went like this:

"'DEAR MAJOR HOLROYD:

"'Because we have been friends for so long—ten years, isn't it?—ever since I was a baby of thirteen and you first came down here with Gerald, I know you will understand. It has always seemed to me simply absurd and wicked to let a mere convention stand in the way of a person's happiness, especially when it is only one's pride that would suffer by defying it, and when the happiness at stake is that of the person for whom one cares more than for anything or anyone else in the world. Of course, it's my own happiness at stake, too, but I really don't mind about that. So I am going to write very plainly.

"'I have seen for three or four years that you care about me, and I know—it's my love for you that makes me understand you in this as in

everything else—I know that what keeps you from telling me and asking me to marry you is that you are poor and I am rich. Well, what does that matter? But as I see that it will always matter to this extent, I am taking my courage in both hands and asking you whether you will marry me. I suppose I couldn't do it if I weren't so *sure* that you care—and all the time you've tried so hard, so splendidly bravely, to make it seem to me and the others that it was only the old brotherly caring—while I *felt* the difference and ached to hear you tell me.

"'Anyhow, I will give you a loophole of escape. This is leap year, so you can look on my proposal as sober earnest or as a mere leap year joke. If you take it as a joke, I shall quite understand—only please answer *somehow*, yes or no.

"'Always,

"'Your "affectionate little friend" as before
"ALETHEA.'

"Sit still. Yes I know. But I read the beastly thing right through. I suppose I was mad. Some things make one mad.

"Well, of course, I knew I'd got to send it straight back to Holroyd and pretend I hadn't been an utter devil; and just as I'd stuck it back in its envelope and the whole thing in a fresh one, he banged the door and came smack in, looking ghastly. He held out his hand for the letter, and I said: 'You're only just in time, old man. In another jiffy I'd have read it. You shouldn't be so jolly free with your love letters.'

"I had to say that because I should have said it if I hadn't known what it was, or if I hadn't known it *wasn't*.

"He looked as if he hadn't heard and said: 'It's my rotten head. I hardly know what I'm doing. Good night,' and he went.

"I felt pretty sick—for I've never had a friend like Holroyd. He's dragged me out of more messes than one since before I joined the Battery; and now here was he in the very devil of a mess himself and one could do nothing. Besides, he's the sort of fellow who wouldn't stand any meddling.

"The days went by, cold February days—and no part of the year is more beastly depressing, is it? I wondered what on earth he would do, accept or refuse. I didn't know which to hope

for, for either way *someone* had got to have a smashing blow.

"The next time that I was at the Murchisons' after Fr—Miss Thingummy came down again, as luck would have it, Holroyd happened to turn up. He was in rather good spirits, and he talked to her quite a lot. I didn't get a look in. He was even chaffing her about her enthusiasm for something or other—Wagner, I think—and she was treating him like one of us, retorting and teasing him. She looked quite young and so bright, and her color was coming and going awfully prettily. Her eyes looked much larger, and so dark and soft; they're very blue eyes, and shadowy.

"What! In love with him! She? Oh, you can't speculate about a woman like her; it would be like whistling in a cathedral. She's mad on music. I suppose it was that. But I couldn't make Holroyd out. He seemed to have forgotten the letter, or do you think he had refused? Heaven knows! Then, somehow, they got drawn into the general conversation, which was about an engagement just announced; and someone said: 'I wonder if anyone ever does really propose in leap year? I mean a girl, of course. I wonder what would happen if she did?'

"I felt Holroyd grow suddenly awfully still; you know that *different* stillness, however quiet a person naturally is. I didn't dare look at him, but he'd never show anything he didn't mean to, and of course I *knew*, worse luck! Then I heard her answering—What? Who? Miss Thingummy, of course—and she spoke quite scornfully.

"Of course not!" she said. 'At least, not in our class. If there were any real reason why the man absolutely couldn't propose, the girl wouldn't wait till leap year to help him. But what tremendous courage it would need!'

"How would you propose to anyone?" suggested Mrs. Cameron.

"I couldn't do it," she answered, unconcernedly. 'At least, I suppose I *could*; but I never shall!'

"There'll be no need, perhaps," said the Colonel.

"He's Lady Murchison's brother, and always looks at the woman very hard—I wish you hadn't christened her 'the woman'—and she's charming to him—treats him with such a pretty deference. I sometimes wondered if he had any designs, but he's a wary old bird.

"I hope not," said Miss Thingummy, laughing; and then she flushed up furiously, as though she saw another interpretation to her careless words.

"Goodness knows what Holroyd was feeling like. I can't even now make him out, unless it is that he simply wasn't thinking consciously of falling in love with anyone. Perhaps he thought that, as he never had yet, he never would.

"The next startler was that he'd got a tiptop berth at the War Office, and was going to take up the job almost at once.

"It was I who let it out to her. Of course, I thought she knew, and I was rather rel—surprised when she just said, 'Oh, how nice for him!' and seemed quite uninterested.

"Then Holroyd began a perfectly insolent system of snubbing her whenever he spoke to her. What he was driving at, goodness knows. For instance, one night at dinner at the Colonel's, when he had taken her in and I was on her other side, she said to him awfully kindly: 'Have you settled yet where your flat's to be?'—we'd all been giving him advice gratis on the subject—and he simply half looked round in his loftiest way and said, 'Quite, thanks,' in a tone that would have made the butter keep all August.

"She was silent a moment, and then began telling me of her young brother's luck in the navy; he'd invented something or other and the Admiralty had bought it.

"That's the way Holroyd went on; and the end of it was that she naturally let him alone. I don't blame her, and I began to think perhaps—Well, I can't understand it.

"The very next Sunday, after parade service, I got out of church promptly and waited round the corner of the porch till she came out. I waited there

because if you're actually at the door and in view, those awful Perhams always nab you and drag you to lunch. She came out with the Murchisons, and through the little window in the side of the porch I saw Holroyd standing just behind, evidently waiting till she'd got out of the way to cut straight across the square into barracks. He seemed to avoid her all he knew, which was a pointless affront, for she didn't bother about him.

"The Murchisons stopped outside the door, and she laughed and said: 'I'm representing Captain and Mrs. Cameron in church today. They've gone up to town till Tuesday.'

" 'Oh, then, do come in to lunch with us,' chirped dear old Lady M. 'And, by the bye, I want to congratulate you. It is delightful news'—you know the old girl's way of enthusing, don't you? 'We're *delighted*, and we want to hear all about it.' And old Sir Conrad joined in, thumping his stick goutily: 'Yes, my dear, hearty congratulations! He's a very lucky fellow, and I'm sure you're very happy about it.'

" 'I was just bowled over, I can tell you, Aunt Agatha—especially when she said—she has the most fascinating way of laughing and blushing *in her voice*; I never heard any other woman do it—' 'Thank you, oh, thank you *very* much. But I didn't think anyone would know yet, and I believe you're the third set of people who've congratulated me already!'

" 'Well, come back now and tell us all about it,' they said together. They had all moved on a few steps to the left.

" 'I'd love to,' she answered, 'but I'll run after you; I must just catch Major Holroyd as he comes out and give him a message from Captain Cameron.'

"At that moment Holroyd did come out and down the steps and walked across the square, and I hope I shall never again see anyone look as he looked. Even his step was different; he walked mechanically, like a man in his sleep. He must have heard her last words, but he never turned.

"The Murchisons went on, and the woman ran back a pace or two and

called after him, just as the sun came out gloriously and shone right on her where she stood by the railings. It made her look, somehow, very slender and fragile—I hadn't noticed that about her before—as if she ought to be taken care of.

"As she called out, 'Major Holroyd!' her voice sounded awfully clear and happy, and her face looked so young and sparkling. But he didn't see. He stopped dead but did not turn back; he just half turned his head over his shoulder and said, without looking at her, 'Well?'

"The voice was the voice of that horrible evening, and his face was white and set and stern. The light all died out of hers as she stared at him, pausing for a moment in a puzzled, troubled way.

"Then she called out her message, and Holroyd answered, 'All right,' still in that abominable voice, and went straight on into barracks; and she turned and walked after the Murchisons, very slowly.

"Then suddenly it flashed on me that they were congratulating her on her young brother's luck. I was feeling beastly giddy with the heat, so I went back to my quarters; and I was awfully upset about Holroyd, too.

"I wondered—I do still—whether he thought, as I did, that she had got engaged, and *that* upset him, or whether he wasn't thinking of that, but of his awful leap year letter, and *that* worried him; or whether perhaps he had accepted the proposal and suddenly found out that he—that he wasn't '*not* in love with anyone' else. Well, I don't know. Life's a ghastly muddle.

"It was only a week after that that he went to start on his new job.

"There was supposed to be a jolly farewell dinner at the Colonel's the night before, but it, somehow, fell beastly flat. Miss Thingummy was down with neuralgia or something, and couldn't come, and the Colonel was snappy and absent; and we were all jolly glad to clear out.

"Holroyd had said good-bye to the troop that morning at drill.

"Next day I dropped in at the Camerons' to tea, and she was better and downstairs, but she looked frightfully tired. Neuralgia *does* take it out of you. It was the very dickens of a day, too, drizzling hard; you know what Dorchester's like on a rainy day—enough to give anyone the blues.

"Presently young Murchison came in with his infernal cackling laugh, calling out:

" 'Well, here's news!'

"Everyone said, 'What?' and when he yelled, 'Why, Holroyd's engagement,' everyone shouted 'What?' louder still.

"Well, Aunt Agatha, you know already that I'm a bounder. I looked at her; I couldn't help it. I should have had to, even if I'd known I'd be shot the next minute. And she seemed hardly to have heard. I really *had* thought she rather liked Holroyd—only *liked*, you know; but her hands didn't clench, nor her lips tighten, nor her color change; none of the invariable things happened. She looked straight at young Murchison, quite easily, and said in rather an indifferent voice—just the way she used to talk to Holroyd himself at first:

" 'How exciting! Tell us some more.'

"Murchison was ready enough, and I knew what was coming. 'Holroyd

was engaged to Lady Alethea Bolton, and he'd never told a soul except that snuffy old Mr. Perham, of all people. Oh, and when he'd been given the troop's presentation electric clock, with the usual remarks, he'd thanked them and said they certainly *would* hear of his marriage soon!'

Paul stopped.

"Is that all?" I asked. "What about the woman?"

"Oh, she's jogging on as usual," replied Paul gruffly. "She does a bit of slumming and a lot of music, as she always did. She's back in Manchester at present, but I hear she's going down to stay with the Camerons soon, and I suppose some day she'll marry the Colonel."

I studied the boy's face.

"Do you know Lady Alethea?" I inquired.

"Yes," growled Paul.

We were silent.

"There's one thing I haven't told you," he said presently. "I'll leave you to guess that. Perhaps it's the explanation. God knows!"

There was a long pause.

"I must go," said Paul suddenly, "or the pater'll be worrying. Good night, Aunt Agatha."

He kissed me with a new gentleness, and went out into the still falling snow.



THE REVENANT

By KELSEY PERCIVAL KITCHEL

I SAID: "I will forget. The little dead,
Deserted heart of me can bear no more.
Forgetfulness will bring content," I said.

Then from the sorrowing past arose before
My hungry eyes your face. I—I forget!
While beneath your feet my quivering heart lies yet!

A SONG OF THE VAGRANT SINGER

By CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

IN stately halls I share the feast,
By campfire help prepare it;
When soldiers flay the ravished beast,
At board of lordliest or least,
I'm straightway bid to share it.

I sing the lover serenades,
The free lance songs of glory;
And rustics leave their crusted spades,
Their churn and spinning wheel the maids,
To hear me rhyme a story.

For workaday I rhyme away
To hero days, to olden
And bolder times, ere life was gray,
But red with blood, with favors gay;
I sing the gray world golden!

I outface bravos with my verse;
With measures sad or saucy
Lure smiles from lips that frame a curse,
Rhyme silver from the peddler's purse,
Rhyme heart from out the lassie.

I filch the lilt from throat o' lark;
From seamen's chanty dipsy
I steal the swing—but in the dark
Come words like winged anvil spark—
Thieve tunes from thieving gipsy.

His hookah with the Turk I try;
With Poles I wear the dolman;
With king and cutpurse verify
"All things to all men"—that am I,
For I am one with all men!



A MAN may smile and smile and be a villain—or just a simple idiot.

THE LOST CERTIFICATE

By HAROLD C. BURR

V LANGE wanted to see young George Kelsey on a little matter of business. Now, whenever anyone wanted to interview that busy young personage during office hours he went down to Wall Street. Kelsey was senior partner in the firm of Kelsey & Ketcham, dealers in investment securities. And Vlange went straight to headquarters. Those were dull days in financial zoological gardens. Bulls and bears and spring lamb served with U. S. Mint sauce were being featured as usual, but the market was sluggish. There was nothing doing. Therefore Kelsey welcomed his old college roommate with his mind free and his time his own.

"George," said Vlange as soon as they had the private office alone, "I'm going off on a trip. The doctor says I'm run down. That's bally old rot, of course, but there's my mother to humor. Anyway, I'm going to sail on the *Lavania* tomorrow. But I want you to do me a favor before I go."

"Sure, old man—anything."

Vlange shifted his legs. "You never knew Blanche Winston, did you?" he prefaced his desires, not as a question. "She's a Miss Lochinvar out of the West, and she wants to take a flier at stock gambling. She's got one hundred shares of Wildcat Common to put up as collateral. Otherwise she's broke."

"We don't care much about taking stock margins," Kelsey declared frankly, thoughtfully smoothing out the stubbed corners of his blotter. "Burt kicks worse than I do. You know how we fellows would get stung in a sudden big panic. The market price for cash is always the same. Wildcat's a mining stock, too. It's been out on the Curb

until lately. But we'll stretch a point for you. I'll convince Ketcham. What does she want to buy?"

"Nebraska Central. She claims to have gotten hold of a red hot tip in Chicago. But she's emerald green at the game. She's on here visiting us."

"But if she hasn't a cent, how can she pay her commissions, keep her interest paid up?"

"Don't say a word please," pleaded Vlange sheepishly. "Blanche Winston wouldn't know a quotation if she saw it in print. She did have a position in a broker's out West somewhere, but she only stayed a week. The poor child's got it into her pretty head that she's got to be a wage earner. I'm doing the forking-over for the minor costs. I'll write you a cheque before I go, and you can keep the change. You see, it all depends on how long you have to carry the Nebraska. The interest may mount up. But cable me the minute the cheque's run out—write, anyway. *Don't* go to her."

Kelsey was looking at him comically. "Caught you?"

"No, not at all," grinned Vlange. "Miss Winston's a friend of the family. But you wait until she looks at you with those deep eyes of hers. Look out for your bachelor vows if you've made any. She'd make a man out of a monk."

But Kelsey had been through all that, and he smiled cynically.

"Go ahead and laugh!" taunted the other. "But I guess I know a queen. Eyes! I never saw anything like 'em. Do you remember the days when we used to go out in a canoe together? It was on that vacation we took in the Maine woods. Remember the pool at

the bend of the river? We used to paddle up there and swing in under the bank. Well, one day I leaned over the side and saw the sky in the water mirror, blue and bright and quiet and deep, deep down. That's as near as I can come to Blanche's eyes. But we're drifting. What do you think of the proposition?"

Kelsey did some mental figuring for protection's sake. He knew the inside history of Nebraska Central. The stock had been to the washtubs of high finance. It was inflated most of the time to look well on the tape. But it was a safe enough purchase around twenty, its present price. The pool that controlled it meant honestly by the road. At present it was just sick and had to be doctored to keep up a showing. And Wildcat Common was selling at thirty-six. If a big break came, Kelsey & Ketcham could dispose of the Wildcat and still offset any loss on Nebraska.

"Leave me her address," he said at his decision, "and have her send along her margin. We'll buy the stock at the opening in the morning."

Vlange poked his hand down inside the lapel of his coat. "I've brought the certificate along with me. Just give me a receipt and the rest can be reported by mail—if you prefer," winking. "But she's almighty good to look at, old fellow."

"I'll take your word for it," yawned the dubious broker. "You always were an awful liar. I'm a woman hater, to boot. So where does your girl with the sky pool orbs get on?" Vlange was preparing to leave. "But tell me more about her," Kelsey went on, seriously curious. "Known her long?"

"Not very. There isn't much that I can tell. She's one of the mater's one best bets. Dug her up out in Arizona somewhere last summer. Blanche doesn't talk about herself much, consequently we don't know much about her. But she belongs. You'll like her."

Vlange left his personal cheque and the gaudy vermilion and gold certificate of the Wildcat company behind him. On the stroke of ten in the morning the Nebraska Central was

bought. Blanche Winston was sent a report by mail.

Young Kelsey had telephoned his instructions downtown, and was late in arriving at the office. It was fully eleven o'clock before he was seated at his desk, tearing away at his heap of mail with straightened forefinger. He had passed a bad night and was tired and sleepy and sore on himself. But suddenly his languor vanished. He bent forward on his elbows, reading the square of white paper with its huge black lettering with aroused interest, astonishment, fear. The moods were his in the order named.

Usually these notices are sent out by Stock Exchange houses through the official printer. But this one was from the Pinkerton detective agency. It was dated Chicago. It set down in black and white standing type that one hundred shares of Wildcat Mining Common, Certificate Number 393912, had been lost or stolen. Transfer had been stopped and all persons were cautioned against negotiating the same. In the event of the stock being found the agency was to be notified.

Kelsey leaned back in his pivot chair and whistled. The number of the Wildcat certificate Vlange had turned over to him was 393912! He was a receiver of stolen property, and Blanche Winston—An endless vista of nasty possibilities dawned upon him. There could be no doubt of the damning certainty of his discovery. The number was an unusually high one, easy to remember—393912. He had looked at it carelessly the night before and been impressed that way.

But perhaps the girl was innocent enough. Vlange had vouched for her. Anyway, the only manly thing was to give her a hearing. He brushed the soaking perspiration off his forehead and wondered how the dickens he was going to manage the ticklish business. Vlange, confound him, was miles away down the bay and useless. Kelsey & Ketcham had committed themselves and there was only one avenue of escape. The scandal would be sure to come out. But the next minute he had changed his

view. Perhaps it would be just as well to sound the Pinkerton people first. There might be some mistake, after all; there must be. In that event it would be best that Miss Winston never know of the suspicions directed at her. He laughed nervously. Why, Miss Winston was vouched for by the Vlanges.

He got the detective bureau on the wire. Certainly they would send a man over. Oh, this was Mr. Kelsey talking? What was the matter? But Kelsey had rung off. He needed those few precious minutes to arrange his battle front. He would have to fool the shrewdest men in the detective profession. It was vital to the girl's safety that they be kept in the dark for the present.

Mr. James Gilroy, of the agency, wore a pancakelike derby. Also he affected square-toed shoes reminiscent of the police department. His suits were always the same—always serge, always blue, always double-breasted. On his aggressive upper lip was a blacking brush mustache. But Gilroy had solved more mysteries than any two men below the dead line. Such was the personage who sent in his official card to young Mr. Kelsey.

He came in the dark as to what was wanted of him. But George Kelsey, harassed between plain pointing duty and friendly loyalty, didn't beat around the bush.

"Oh, yes. Glad to know you, Mr. Gilroy. It's about that lost Wildcat certificate," he said without preamble. "Just what were the circumstances of its disappearance?"

Gilroy's intent, roving little eyes fixed him like twin gimlets. "You think you've found a trace of Number 393912?"

"Certainly," confessed the quickly cornered broker with some asperity, "or I wouldn't have sent for you. Further than that, I am convinced that I can recover the stock for its rightful owner. But I've got to know all about the theft."

Those disconcerting eyes sparkled, giving the impression that the gimlets were boring a peep hole into his very

soul. "The deal was pulled off by a female stenographer," the sleuth snapped, "in Sharp & De Boist's employ. It's a Chicago concern. The lady crook was cute and hid the certificate in her morning paper. That night she was careful about taking the morning news home for preservation. Want to hear the details, Mr. Kelsey?"

"No. Only her name."
"Westervelt."

Kelsey experienced an inward shock that he contrived to smother under the surface. It was a short shift from Westervelt to Winston. And Vlange had said that she was from the West. Kelsey smiled knowingly. Hadn't known her long—that explained it. He berated himself for gullible blindness that he hadn't seen through the imposition earlier. The Vlanges had been fooled by a clever adventuress. That was all, just fooled. It was an old story. He'd give Gilroy the facts as he knew them and cable Vlange.

Gilroy listened, his stubby fat arms folded across his chest. "You'd better send a decoy message to the girl," he commanded, quick to grasp the situation and lay his trap. "You just get her here and call me up. We'll catch her with the goods on her. Be sure to give her the stock, d'yer see? We've got the Westervelt woman's picture."

Kelsey nodded comprehension. "I'll send for her right away. She ought to get down here during business hours."

"Good." But the private detective was thinking. "No, by Jericho, it won't work. It's too easy to botch. She might get suspicious and bolt. You'd have to hang onto her until I got here. It might not work."

The young stockbroker was pondering the problem. "You might hide yourself somewhere around within calling distance. There's a clothes closet. Think you could cramp yourself in there? It might be a watched pot that never would boil."

Gilroy slapped his thigh resoundingly. "Say, that's what I ought to have thought of! It's my business, Mr. Kelsey. I'll wait around here until your boy announces her, then lock myself in

there. You'll have to signal me. Wait until she gets the certificate in her hand, d'yer understand? Then I'll chip into the doings and it will be good night for Westervelt!"

"All right. Make yourself comfortable." Kelsey returned to his neglected mail.

Gilroy democratically hoisted his feet to the window ledge and lighted a rank cigar, black like a stick of licorice. Forthwith he exonerated Kelsey of all blame by the recital of parallel cases that he acted out intensely as well as retold. The man from Pinkerton's was sociable, loquacious. But Kelsey forgot that grumpy mood his bachelorhood had put upon him. He listened good-naturedly and attended to business. He got the Elliott House on the wire. He smiled at Gilroy as he hung up the receiver. Gilroy puffed, complacently efficient, and winked back. Miss Blanche Winston had said that she would be down immediately.

Some three-quarters of an hour later the office boy laid a card before the already tingling Mr. Kelsey. "Tell her to wait just a minute," he instructed. Then swinging his chair toward the awakening sleuth, "She's here, outside."

Gilroy took up his hidden post with ease and dispatch.

George Kelsey, bachelor young gentleman of affairs, had his back to the door of his private sanctum. He heard it open haltingly, heard a silken swish. Silence. He tossed some papers importantly around on his desk. He turned his head negligently, his revolving chair following in squeaky complaint as if annoyed to protestation at this trivial disturbance its master was compelled to notice. Kelsey's mouth flew open dumbly. Miss Blanche Winston stood revealed.

There is far more than that mere statement implies. She was a slim creature, tall as a river reed. Even the prosaic Mr. Kelsey was reminded of a fawn at rest. About the delicately tilted nose was a pertness that made a certain young man in the near foreground sigh lamentably. Those adorable lips underneath were surely designed to kiss. He

found himself wondering if the rose redness of them wouldn't rub. The whole picture she made was fragile, sweet. She seemed undecided, half afraid. Here was a girl who wanted to be comforted, protected. Kelsey was willing. He rose in neglected politeness, went over and absently locked the door of the clothes closet. Quite as absently he dropped the key in his pocket.

"Miss Winston, I believe?" he began engagingly. "Won't you sit down? Warm, isn't it?" he rattled on. "I sent for you about your margin. Please sit down."

She was still standing. "Thank you." Miss Winston's smile was as dazzling as winter sun on snow. "What—what can I do? I thought Mr. Vlange arranged it so I wouldn't be bothered."

"So he did, to be sure. You know Vlange, don't you? Bully boy. But you see—er—my dear young lady, you really ought to have the Wildcat in your name. There's talk of a dividend." He wished that her frown of perplexity would be less distracting while he discussed business. "I wanted to consult you before—er—er—I took any decisive step. Have you known Ted long?"

At such irrelevancy the girl never balked. "Only a year," she confessed prettily. "His mother's been lovely to me."

"Oh, Ted's a brick." Whereat he waxed into a dissertation on Vlange's personal worth. From then on the conversation progressed by easy stages.

And had the captive man from Pinkerton's employed the keyhole ten minutes later he would have seen Kelsey and the beautiful deceiver, very close and whispering, over by the ticker. He was translating the alphabetical puzzle of the tape for her. But Gilroy was forgotten even while he waited for the signal.

Into this Chamber of Contentment there intruded a metallic ring, persistently. It was the telephone. Kelsey was startled out of heaven back to earth. That buzzing bell summoned a shadow back into his life—Gilroy, the soulless detective. Why, it was Gilroy who wanted to arrest this poor girl!

But he had forestalled that. He had locked Gilroy up himself. How to get rid of him? It was a delicate decision to reach. The telephone bell continued to ring.

Kelsey excused himself to Miss Winston, his heart a-quake. He had gotten himself into a deuce of a pickle. Gilroy couldn't be expected to remain passively in that closet forever. Certainly when he began to rough around in there and get noisy there would be some lovely complications. Of course she wasn't guilty. There was some awful mistake. No woman with steady eyes like hers could be. But Vlange had forgotten to state that the pool was over serene. It was an oversight of Vlange's. Then he said "Hello" into the mouthpiece.

"Yes, yes. . . . Who? . . . Gilroy! The dev—. . . Yes, certainly. Just hold the wire. . . . Hello! Yes, this is Mr. Kelsey. . . . The what? . . . Oh, the Wildcat. . . . Yes, I received the circular. . . . *What?* What was that? . . . Disregard it! The certificate hasn't been stolen, after all? It's been found? . . . Whoop-la!" Kelsey rang off.

He returned to Miss Winston radiant. Suddenly she was facing him squarely, accusingly, her back to the window, her hands behind her back. Those gravely placid mountain pools were ten thousand times harder to look into than Gilroy's boring gimlets. He shifted guiltily, penitently. What would she think of him?

"Mr. Kelsey," she said evenly, "you mentioned my stock. And there have been—other things I haven't understood. This seems to be a strangely conducted office. Isn't an explanation—"

He made a gesture and called to Gilroy. "Oh, I forgot. He's locked in." Kelsey didn't glance toward her as he inserted the key and flung the door wide. Gilroy stepped out somewhat the worse for a half-hour in the narrow confines of the airless cubbyhole. "This isn't your prisoner, Gilroy," he continued. "This is Miss Winston, my friend. You'd better get your office on the phone. Everything's in a muddle."

The detective was staring sharply at

the girl. "You're mistaken, Mr. Kelsey," he maintained stoutly. "This is the Westervelt woman all right."

Kelsey stared at him in shocked incredulity. "Impossible!" he scoffed. "Miss Winston's a lady, sir!"

"Lady or no lady, she's the original of that picture." He groped at his breast inside his coat and drew out a photograph. Kelsey wouldn't glance at it. Gilroy turned on the girl harshly. "Do you dare deny, madam, that you were once employed by Sharp & De Boist?"

Blanche drew herself up proudly. "And suppose I was, sir? Pray, must I give an accounting to you?"

"Aha!" Gilroy glowered at her pouncingly. "You admit it then! So you stole the certificate, eh? Well, what made you do it?"

"I did nothing of the sort," she answered unflinchingly. And Kelsey wanted to shout his relief. "The stock was mine. I decided to come East. On the day before I left I went into the cashier's cage. The tin box of securities was lying on the desk open. I saw my property and took it home. It was mine. I had the prior right. Later I wrote to Mr. Sharp, explaining. There, sir, are you satisfied?" she finished in fine scorn.

"That ought to explain everything, Gilroy," put in Kelsey. "You Pinkertons have bungled this job beautifully. First you get the thief's name Westervelt. It's Winston. And she isn't a thief at all, let me tell you. Can't you see through a ladder, man? This girl simply took possession of her own property. Now Sharp & De Boist have wired and set you straight. I just took the message. I think Miss Winston has been annoyed, suspected enough. We both owe her an apology. Your headquarters knows all the facts right. Call 'em up."

But Gilroy wasn't done with the girl yet. "And you expect me to fall for that fairy tale!" he sneered professionally. "Sharp & De Boist wanted her apprehended for stealing what was already hers? Quite likely! You'd better come along with me, young lady."

Miss Winston actually smiled at him patiently. "There wasn't much system in our office. The cashier must have lost his head completely and given the alarm. You see, only Mr. Sharp knew the stock was mine. I simply gave it to him to keep. He was very absent-minded. It must have been entered on the books as his. I'm sure I don't know. You're behaving very childish, Mr. Gilroy, when there's a telephone right at your elbow," she wound up a shade too distinctly. "I'm positive you'll find everything just as I've stated."

"All the same, I don't like the looks of things," he said sullenly. Mr. Gilroy thrust out his chin pugnaciously, obstinately. "It looks like a frame-up to me. But I'll go over and see the chief. Guess you two won't run away. Anyway, I wouldn't advise it."

"Good-bye," coaxed Kelsey meaningfully.

"Good-bye," chimed the girl after the detective's broad retreating back.

Young George Kelsey got as far toward his morning's mail again as his desk side. Then on impulse he whirled sharply and held out his hands. "Forgive me, won't you?" he pleaded simply. "It was a rotten thing for me to do."

She was confused, all but her eyes—but her lashes covered them. "Why—why, I suppose I did place myself in a pretty bad light," she hesitated. Somehow he conceived the absurd notion that if he had his arms about her, hugging her close to him, that would make it easier for her. But there, she was going on and he wasn't listening. "I'm just glad it turned out the way it did, Mr. Kelsey. It wasn't your fault at all. I'm glad—of everything."

"You're as generous as you're—good," he said lamely.

When a man is rattled woman is coolly calm. "Oh!" she laughed, equanimity restored.

He ushered her to the door and stood aside bowing. Miss Winston gathered her skirts in a little bunch at her knee and looked up at him a second with up-tilted chin. Afterward he was sorry he hadn't kissed her. But quite like a man

he saw the invitation too late, and all he did do was to mumble some inanity about meeting her again—and she was gone with a little laugh that might have meant anything from disappointment to derision.

Immediately thereafter young George Kelsey went home himself. It had been a big day for him. He had smoothed down the rumpled plumage of the law; he had made makeshift friends with a charming girl. I am not sure whether he closed his eyes and attuned his listening ear to organ music. Perhaps he even went so far as to picture himself staring ecstatically adown a church aisle, waiting for the blushing bride to sweep slowly, majestically to her stand beside him. Then, too, he may have mumbled over his answers to the black-robed clergyman. On all of which we may only hazard an unimportant guess. Certain it is that romance wine was mounting to his foolish young head, dizzying him.

Not so back at the offices of Kelsey & Ketcham. Ten minutes after Mr. Kelsey's broad back had vanished into the descending elevator Gilroy reappeared, purple-visaged, angry, threatening. He swore in picturesque police dialect, jerked out an explanation. None of the clerks could help him materially. Yes, the young lady who had called on Mr. Kelsey had also left. That was the sum total of their information. Gilroy took possession of a telephone. He kept the wires hot as far uptown as Mulberry Street. But it was no use now. The birds had flown. Whereat Mr. Gilroy of the agency consumed the rest of his working day calling Mr. Kelsey unpretty names.

And Mr. Kelsey himself ably seconded his work when on the morrow he read the dainty feminine note he found on his desk.

MY DEAR LITTLE GEORGIE

Either a man must be very young or very old for a woman to make a fool of him. Gilroy, you have observed, is neither. Which is just another way of saying you're easy. Tra-la! If you had been watching me, bold, bad adventures that I am, you would no doubt have learned something to your advantage, as the newspaper personals say. But you are such a self-centered, conceited little fledgeling the

truth may wake you up. To begin with, don't try to catch us. (Didn't know I had a pal, did you? Well, I have, and the squarest crook that ever floated phony stock or forged a cheque. Guess I won't run in single harness much longer if Duke speaks the word. Wish me luck!)

I left him downstairs when I went up to see what you wanted—within easy signaling distance. I needed him all right to get me out of the scrape. While we were at the ticker I just gave him the trouble wig-wag through the window. It was enough to put old Duke wise. He knew Gilroy to be on the case. The Pinkertons never called you up at all. It was my pal. For the rest, it was a wild sort of a lark to attempt to speculate on stolen margin. Neither should I have hastened into your trap at your bidding. But, after all, we women are shuttle-

cocks of caprice, and if we honest thieves never blundered we'd never be caught. Vlange said you were attractive. And there's where great-grandmother Eve butted into the game. I was curious to see you, match my wits against yours. Who has won? Modesty prompts me to trust your gallantry. Oh, by the way, the picture the Pinkertons had is No. 393912, Rogues' Gallery. So much for coincidence. Poor Vlange and his dear ma-mah! But I've found out one thing—the upper crust of society is just *dough*. No more social whirl for little Blanche. Hereafter I stick to legitimate, lady-like burglary.

B.

P. S. Duke has just asked me, and I'm the happiest, luckiest girl alive! Why don't you marry—one of your lady customers, for instance?



THE GRAVE OF CARE

By C. L. ARMSTRONG

WE buried Care in an open grave,
 And high, as we tamped the sods,
 The laugh and the song and the cheer we gave
 Rang out to the Hill of Gods.
 We buried Care with a right good will
 And never a sigh gave we,
 And over the mound we danced our fill
 And planted the seeds of glee.
 It's many a day since the seeds were sown
 In a single mirthful hour,
 And up from the mould they all have grown
 With many a charming flow'r.
 There are Blossoms of Cheerfulness, Buds of Mirth,
 Sprigs of the Merry Heart;
 There are perfumed flow'rs of the Joy of Earth
 And blooms of the Better Part.
 We water them all as they grow and grow
 With the tears of our revelry,
 And hour by hour they nod and blow
 To the beautiful sunlit sea.
 So sing, oh, sing me a carefree song
 And take me—I wot not where,
 So the sun be warm and the day be long
 And the flow'rs on the grave of Care.

MONEY

By SAMUEL SALINGER

MONEY—otherwise known as Tin, Dough, Cush, Gelt, Rocks, etc.
The Corpuscles of National Circulation which indicate the strength of our Constitution.

It is often called a Curse; some swear by it, others swear for it, and still others swear at it.

It often causes a species of mental derangement or delirium called Moneymania. Many are willing to be thus inoculated.

It is the feature of social distinction. It is the measure of intelligence: those who have it are Wise; those who have it not are Foolish. Possession of it entitles one to the use of a Moneygram.

Though a Medium of exchange, it has no connection with Souls or Astral bodies.

It is the religion of today, often called Moneytheism. Preachers pray for it; laymen lay for it.

It is the Be-All and the End-All. Children cry for it, women sigh for it, men die for it, and all lie for it.



HUSBAND—If a man steals—no matter what it is—he will live to regret it.

WIFE—During our courtship you used to steal kisses from me.

HUSBAND—Well, you heard what I said.



A WOMAN in the case may be all right; it is when there are two that there is likely to be trouble.



A WOMAN stops telling her age as soon as age begins telling on her.



ALL flowers bloom in the conservatory except the wallflower.

AN EFFECT IN GRAY

By ALLYS DE BOUTEVILLE

WONDER where my pipe is? Always used to stay on one corner of the mantelpiece beside that old stein without a handle. Jim broke it off our first year at college. Well, let's see if the pipe's not there. May be in that brass bowl sister gave me. Never could keep the thing clean; always got black and spotty. No, 't isn't there; where the devil is it then? Gee, this chair feels comfy. I'd forgotten how good it feels to put your feet on a fender.

But—why, of course—that pipe's in the pocket of my old coat hanging behind the door. Had it on the first time she ever came here, with her mother, and I stuck the pipe in the pocket. Lord, yes, here it is; and the lining is all charred. Wonder I didn't go up in smoke. Funny how things come back to you; hadn't thought of that day for ages. I'd always sort of known the Mortons, but Amy had been off abroad for so long that I'd forgotten there was such a person. Used to meet her mother around pretty often—large, kittenish, pearl earrings, regulation "society mamma." Why on earth did they come here? Gosh—where are those matches? Hold on, can't you? All right; go out if you like. I'll try again. Now, that's better. Oh, yes, Mrs. M—— thought Amy would like to see my pictures. I was sitting here reading rather a shady book, and someone knocked. I growled, "Come in"—thought it was my man—and in puffed Mrs. M——. I got up, slid the book under a pillow and turned purple. Looked like a cad, you see—plaid smoking jacket, slippers and so forth, and the pipe. Well, then, I saw the girl. She drifted in behind Mrs. M——, looking so insignificant by comparison and so smothered in clothes that I felt rather sorry for

her. I showed 'em some of my things, mostly heads of society women. Mrs. M—— put up her lorgnette and gurgled over them, but Amy sighed and looked bored. Finally I asked if she was "coming out." "Of course she is," said the old lady, and then asked in a pathetically anxious tone: "Don't you think she'll make a success?" I took one look at Amy's colorless face, mousy hair, thin, shapeless figure, swallowed all scruples, and said, "You bet." Sounds crude but emphatic.

Wonder why I took a fancy to the child? Perhaps because she looked at me with a quick, cynical smile. She knew she wasn't pretty, and it amused me; girls of eighteen aren't usually cynical. Just as they started off I said: "Oh, by the way, can I do a head of you, Miss Morton? You've got such a wonderful profile." She got red, a dull brick red, but her mother cried: "Oh, really, I should be charmed. I've always said that Amy's nose was sweet." It wasn't. But I only bowed, and soon the sittings began.

Confound that fire, why's it always going out? This room is as cold as charity. But—well, what happened next? Oh, sure, Mrs. M—— wouldn't let Amy come here; said she hadn't time enough to come with her and wouldn't hear of an unchaperoned portrait. Horridly improper, I s'pose. So I went up to their house, big, elaborate place, and used to do a little work, about two dabs a week. Beastly business. Well, I was rushed with other work; couldn't spend all my time up there. Besides, there was nothing you could get out of Amy's face. First I tried her all in rose and gold. But she never smiled; her hair stayed mousy; her

darned mouth would droop. I threw a turpentine can at that picture, and afterward when I had cleaned up the mess nothing showed but her mouth. I cursed good and hard and began again. She went out a lot, dragged around by her enterprising mamma, but she got even thinner; and finally, after a bright blue effect had failed, also a crimson one, I gave up, told her to get a dull gray dress, high-necked, long-sleeved, and painted her that way.

Gee, she was colorless—absolutely drab. She'd sit there with that queer look in her eyes, as if she never could be happy but wanted to most awfully. Then, just before I finished the picture, her engagement was announced—and oh, Lord, talk about satisfaction! Mrs. M—— fairly gurgled, she was so pleased. Her money, also her shrewdness, had netted a just-about-broke English baronet for her “dear Amy” and everything was lovely.

Somehow, though, I felt mad all through. Seemed to me as if Amy couldn't care about him herself, and I sort of hated to think of her suffering.

Well, I went up for the last sitting and found her alone in the improvised studio. It was just a big room with lots of windows, and her picture was propped up in the glare, looking so awfully lifelike that I fairly gasped. But the poor little original! She was hunched up in a corner, sobbing so hard her shoulders quivered every time she breathed. Her thin hair, quite spoiled by marceling, was straggling round her red, swollen eyes, and on her hand was an enormous diamond—heirloom in “his” family, they told me.

“Well,” I said, trying to talk jokingly, “what's the matter? I ought to be the one to howl, for really you ought to have fallen in love with me. So romantic, you know.” She jumped to her feet as if I had touched her with a red hot poker. “How can you?” she screamed, tearing at her handkerchief. “Don't you know—haven't you seen that—that—I've always loved you?” And she ran away.

They're to be married next week. Mrs. M—— doesn't like the picture—thinks it so commonplace. I don't like it either; that's why I've come back to my pipe.



BOARDING HOUSE KEEPER—There's a big duty on meat.
BOARDER AT TABLE—Tough, isn't it, ma'am?



“WHAT would you do if you were alone on an isle?”

“Well, if it were a church aisle, and the groom waited at the other end, I should endeavor to press steadily forward.”



WHEN a woman dresses to please the men, she doesn't have much success with the one who is paying for it.

THE ART OF HUMAN INTERCOURSE

By ROBERT OTTO

MAN can do without a great many things; he cannot do without man. The world has been given to him, but he does not control himself. Nothing in the world is without a master, not even the master. Nothing is free, not even air—you may be deprived of it. Are you coveting a flower? It grows in somebody's garden. Are you in search of wisdom? A man must teach you, or a book which is his. Are you bound for Heaven? St. Peter holds the key. If you are poor, you need men to give to you; if you are rich, you need men to whom to give. On a deserted island you are not happy, whether you are in want or in luxury. To find one's happiness in solitude, one has to be a saint, and this no one is who wishes happiness.

What men give you you must pay for with what you have, or more dearly with what you have not. Even friendship is not given gratis. Everyone has a glorious day of childhood when he finds love without care or sorrow, as the first people found the fruits of Paradise. When this day is passed, you have to earn your bread and your love alike with the sweat of your brow. Hearts must be sown, if hearts are to be reaped.

"If men are not won at will, how should one go about to earn them? What stake does Fate demand for the hope of success?" We learn many things in schools and colleges—the orbits of the stars, the habitats of strange animals, the structures of distant cities which we never see. But we are not taught the state and quality of men who are about us and their natural orbits. We learn how to choose

among fruits and mushrooms, and how to shun those which are harmful. We learn how to make use of domestic animals and how to tame the wild ones, how to coax the lazy horse and curb the temper of the thoroughbred. We are taught to swim and to build bridges over mountain torrents. But how to use good men and soothe evil men, how to flatter the proud and encourage the modest, how to get over tyrants or ford their passions—this we are nowhere taught. You say experience will teach you this. But the school of experience holds its sessions in the graveyard, and the questions of death are of a different kind. Yet you ask: Is it right to make use of men—right to flatter, to serve and to deceive them? To these queries and many more you will find no answer. The clearest mind and the most virtuous character can never know just what is right. Lucky for you that also in this you are not free and that Nature has given you, or denied you, powers, desires and passions which push you along your path and save you the pangs of a choice. If you are, however, one of the fortunate few who are masters of their will, then choose! There are two ways of leading men. You must either love them or despise them, consider them divine beings or mere pawns. There is a third broad and easy way, on which the multitudes are hustling each other and kicking up much dust. This way you must shun.

You are not loved when you are amiable. On the contrary if you are loved you will appear to be amiable. It is easy enough to please others. The difficult thing is to have others please us. This

is the art of human intercourse. You say: "I detest him; he is bad." No, he is diseased. Don't you give your kind solicitude to the sick? And are not the sicknesses of the heart the worst? "But he is free; let him alter himself." Believe in your own freedom, if you have the courage to answer for your actions, but do not burden a weak man with this responsibility. "He is stupid." After all, he is only a stupid man, while he is the cleverest of sheep. Is it necessary for him to bear wool to convince you? "He is not sociable." Make use of him for something else. The vine yields you its grape, the oak its shade. Have you ever looked for grapes from the oak or for shade from the vine?

"He has neither sense nor heart nor virtue nor any other gift. He is a horse." Then ride him. But you are wrong. The giant is only twice the size of a dwarf, and every dwarf is half a giant. Nature has given most people an equal measure of force. With one it is formed into mind, with another into virtue, with a third into beauty, and finally with one into that sense which scents the deeply hidden happiness of life. You will rarely find a man without gifts.

"But he is one of these rare ones; he has neither mind nor heart nor beauty nor wealth." Then at least he will have a good stomach, and there are people who love to hear their digestion praised.

"Even his digestion is poor." Then he will be eating little. Praise his moderation; make a virtue of his necessity.

"But I will not, I may not flatter him. Flattery is sin." Then love him! Love is a kind of flattery which pleases all people, the exalted and the lowly, children and grown-ups, good people and sinners—and it is pleasing also to God.

"But he has not a single merit, and more, he will rob me of my right; he is a fanatic. It is necessary to frighten him. I have the power to crush him." And if you kill his body, what do you gain? The spirit remains; the spirit has no neck. If you execute one hundred fanatics, have you destroyed fanaticism? If you think

so, you are a fool or an ignorant child. Fanaticism is like a tontine; the parts of the dead pass to those who survive. And if you increase the number of the dead, you have done nothing but transplanted the richness of faith from the hearts of many to those of a few and thus increased its power. "Consequently," you ask, "shall we fold our hands in our laps and suffer our enemies to threaten and rob us?" No, that you shall not do. Defend what you have recognized as right, not your own rights, but those of your brethren. Yet only on the battlefield may you inflict wounds. If you are a warrior, fight. If you are an orator, speak against your foe. But outside the battle, off the rostrum, spare him. Do not desecrate the altar of human love, which shields even the murderer, and do not break the peace of God.

"All right; I will love all men; I will endeavor to please all, the clever and the foolish, the exalted and the lowly, the good and the bad. But how does one please the common horde?" There you have to ask someone else. If you are of high spirits, your stooping is in vain; for stupidity is not so stupid that it could not differentiate between a straight line and a curve.

"But I am living among the Philistines; I *must* live among them." You are wrong; you can hang yourself. But if your life is too dear to you, then get along with them. Therefore, strive to win men, and once again make your choice! You do not win men unless you either esteem them or despise them. And if there is one art in which bungling is ridiculous and contemptible, then it is the art of human intercourse. Let my own example be a warning to you. Once in my life, and only once, I sought to obtain a favor from a great man by flattery. From all the wise advice of Chesterfield I chose the finest and best, and tied it together neatly and presented my bouquet. But I was false; my bow was low and stooping, but my soul was straight. I had sugar on my lips and salt in my heart; and the great college president had me—kicked downstairs.

ONE NIGHT

By DANIEL CARSON GOODMAN

MY dear friend, you cannot understand. You say I should blame the moon, and I agree with you that my statement sounds strange. You think I was a little crazy that night? Well, maybe I was, but not in the way you suppose.

My brother had written that he was badly off—"nerves racked, physically broke"—and that he and his pretty young wife were playing at a little game of health on the Island of Oahu, in Hawaii. It wasn't such a long run from Manila, he said in his letter, and wouldn't I get a leave of absence and come over, as, though he might die anyway, he wanted me to meet his beautiful young mate. It would do my foolish bachelor heart good to see how happy he was. . . .

Three days or so later I suddenly persuaded myself that my brother realized the rut I had fallen into better than I did.

Naki planted a few things in my portmanteau, put his little brown hand over mine on the railing of the gangplank, whispered: "I am happy, Mister Seymour George Kennard, you go away—very truly yours" (I taught him that in a rice field) and the steamer jerked me out of my rut—and Manila.

I am not much of a romancer, you know that; life in these God-forsaken barracks seems to that end of a man's make-up, and I haven't any extraordinary amount of what you or your artistic friends would call temperament; but my subjection to the pale yellow influence began before I was out a night.

I suppose I was tired and susceptible, but I tell it honestly, sailing over the smooth water that was more like an ocean of melted glass than anything I can think of, and having a great ball of cold

light streaking its way continually before my eyes—well, it threw me into an odd, strange mood, which I have never been able to explain.

I became a languorous dreamer, forgetting for hours to do anything but lie on my back and gaze stupidly out on the flat empty space beyond the rail. And toward the end of the trip I was nearly unaware of my own existence, going to the daily meals fairly purposeless, and when night came apparently wholly satisfied to lie half-awake in my bunk, dreaming foolish sensuous things while the limpid yellow of the moon played upon my naked body.

The last two or three nights were hot and very moist, yet I sought my solitary close cabin more eagerly than you can imagine. On the deck above me I heard the pajamaed figures pacing restlessly back and forth, trying to get through the dull hot night, but I stayed below, only pitying them because they could not be so strangely happy as I was.

"Well," you will say to me, "this was all unnatural. You were in a state of nervous depression. You were like some hysterical woman." Yet I assure you that I was never more sane. In fact, I was really frightened at being able to see how oddly I was behaving. And I had no one to confide in or remind me that I was acting queerly.

I reached my brother's hotel about one o'clock in the morning. As I neared the place I was for a time my old self again. Perhaps he was worse off than I thought, or—he had died already and left the broken-hearted young wife on my hands. Such thoughts as these chased through my mind as I questioned the little clerk back of the desk.

But he quickly reassured me, saying that my brother was doing well, and had not been confined to his room except for the last day, when he had taken a slight cold. I decided to wait until daylight before I made my presence known.

When I think of it, I am not so surprised at my abnormal responsiveness, my willful yielding to the fascinating tranquillity of your country. You know how it is here. Why, man, last year aside from a few weeks of skirmishing up in the hills we did nothing but hang around, expectantly waiting, waiting—yes, even praying the little browns would bother us again, just to break the monotony.

I was in my room only a few minutes when I chanced to look out of my window onto the balcony that I observed now for the first time. To myself I said that I would spend my night here, the room seeming to lack the lulling effect of my bunk on shipboard.

After that my thoughts seemed to follow each other mechanically. First I sat down restlessly, leaning on my elbows over the bamboo railing, then I fell half asleep, and then—I saw the moon; it held my senses enthralled—molten white, enticing, it hung over me, awaking every weak, sensuous thought in my body. And then, just as mechanically, I followed its rays down onto the sandy beach.

I was like a dog trailing a scent. Before I could stop to understand even, I had passed down the stairway and out under a *lavai*, a sort of canopy, that was spread for a few hundred feet near the water's edge. Of course you won't believe me, and I swear that I can't account for it, but before I knew, I was sitting there on the soft moist sand under the shadows of the canvas—while through a line of towering cocoanut trees I followed the gleam of my unrelenting hypnotizer.

It was indeed fascinating, my friend. Imagine that pale, mystic glow making the spotless stretch of white sand sparkle and glitter like a long bed of fine cut brilliants. Oh, don't laugh—it held me more than ever had a woman's eyes.

The beach was deserted, and I was immersed in this weird enchantment, when I perceived the little hotel clerk at my

elbow. He had observed me going out upon the sand at this late hour.

"Your bed is ready, sir," he announced.

"Yes, I know," said I. "I've been up already."

"There is nothing wrong?"

"Nothing," I answered. At my feet, nearly, came the last wash of the waves, and the yellow light was playing from one crest to another.

"Oh, everything is all right," I laughed, "but I like this. It's great; I'm going to drink in some of it," and I spread my hands out toward the ocean.

He thought I was an odd creature I suppose, but he was polite about it. "Yes, sir," he said, fairly stiffly, I thought. And then he left me, murmuring a protest about the exposing of oneself to the dampness of a Hawaiian night.

I was intoxicated by the breath of the moon, I tell you, just like a lovesick maiden; and had he announced the last struggles of my dear brother, I believe I, unconsciously of course, would have stayed squatting placidly on that cool damp sand.

And now you'll ask me how it was that we came to speak to each other. Of that I have not the faintest idea, nor that I realized at the first instant that before me stood the most attractive woman it has ever been my fortune to behold. For a moment I thought it my imagination. She seemed as nearly ephemeral as the moon's rays. Her hair and her soft white skin looked as silvery as the moon itself, in that night light.

I rose hastily to my feet. Perhaps she had not intended that I should address her, but I saw a small handkerchief lifted to her eyes and a faint, sad smile line her face with the expression that one has when discovered in some unusual emotion. Before I knew, I had spoken to her.

"Anything I can do?"

She stopped and looked at me, too steadily I thought, with not a movement of her lips. I took the instant to study her face. It was young and girlish, yet so impassive and cold. "This is a woman to break a man's heart," said I to myself. Then she answered me.

"There is nothing you can do," and she turned and walked on slowly.

"It's an odd, lonely night," I ventured. "A night like this would bring back the buried thoughts of a St. Cecilia."

She hesitated. "It is a lonely night," I heard her reply, then nearly inaudibly—"but all nights are lonely."

Where we stood was a turn in the beach, and it was with joy in my heart that I saw her walk down to the water's edge instead of keeping on her way to the hotel. I followed her.

"You seem unhappy," said I.

She answered me with a smile, as if to say: "That isn't difficult to see."

I went on, enraptured, bewildered. "You mustn't be unhappy, though I really can understand. It's the moon, believe me. It is treacherous tonight."

She was sobbing gently. "Oh, if I only could blame the moon!"

"Well, it has had a woeful influence over me for about a week," I went on. "I don't know why people are fascinated by it, when it is so unresponsive and cold and unfriendly. Nothing is so morbidly dreary in its way as the moon."

I tried to be sympathetic. And it was no hypocrisy, I can tell you. She had me under the yoke of a strange allurements. I was reduced, body and soul, and she seemed only to increase the effect that the moon had been having over me. I noticed that her face was drawn, her eyes half closed, and her lips, that had been so soft and curved, were now pressed tightly together. I thought I saw her shrink back from me ever so slightly.

"I have come here from simple loneliness," said I. "But you probably have some other reason, a rendezvous perhaps. I'm sorry—I'll go."

At my words her face seemed to take on new life. "Why," she said, "I'm glad. I was praying for someone—that I could talk to. Oh, you'll think me a fool—but I'm truthful. I couldn't stand it any longer—up there in the room. I am unhappy, so unhappy."

Her face went back to its strange, hard lines again. With a quick, impulsive straightening of her shoulders she turned toward the hotel.

I can't tell how it all came about. I'm

not clever with women, and I have lived away from them too long to understand them, but I saw that her leaving would be like the ending of some wonderful dream—and I gained courage, placed my hand on her arm, begging her to tell me, to stay by me.

If you'll believe me, I was more nearly insane at that moment than ever before in my life. The moon was above the trees now, and its light came directly down on her. I saw her bared throat and the way it melted into the fullness of her breast; I saw a slender waist go into longer lines that would have set your painter instinct afire. She stopped suddenly and looked at me, and our glances became locked together. I felt the blood rush to my face—and in the moonlight we stood in deadly silence. I took her hand and led her back under the canopy.

"Life is too short to be unhappy," I remarked.

"It is too short—if you're happy," she smiled.

And there, under the shadows of an early morning, she told me of her unhappiness. She told me how she had married a man nearly twenty years older than she, how he used her as a plaything in his blind love, until his every touch was pain to her. She poured out her heart to me.

"Oh, he is so good and kind and gentle, but he doesn't understand," she exclaimed. "I wanted to be loved—and he only held me up for the inspection of his friends, exhibited me proudly, like a newly bought marble figure. Sometimes I blame myself, but I can't help feeling this way. He has killed every impulse in my body. And it's too late; I have no feelings; I'm dead; I hate him. And he's up there in the room now, dreaming of me, I suppose."

Her confidence maddened me with longing. Poor child, her youth had been stolen from her.

"Dear little girl," I cried, "don't talk like this. You are young and beautiful and you've made a mistake perhaps—but you're not dead." And I told her she had worked a feeling of love in me I had never known.

I can't describe the sensations that came over me. I felt as a child must when

he is given a gift and then sees that it has belonged to his brothers, who have thrown it away. I am cool under fire, believe me—but that little girl started something in me that was wild and frenzied. I could have killed the poor ignorant husband!

It was when the early gray of morning was coming up and we had talked hours, though it seemed minutes, that I leaned toward her suddenly and put my arm around her waist, drew her to me and kissed her tearful eyes, her glorious lips, till I left her breathless. My God, I couldn't help it! I *was* crazy then, if you'll have it, and could hold back no longer.

After a time she pushed me from her, though I was sure I had felt the pressure of her lips in return.

And that is the end of my dream, my friend. That's the reason I'll be here in this damned hole for the rest of my days. I've been straight with you. I cared for her.

Yes, I've told you the whole story. In her next breath I heard her mention the name— Ah, you've guessed it? Yes, you're right! There, in the last glimmer

of that devilish moon, I heard the words that struck me nearly dumb with surprise. As I reluctantly, sadly, pushed her from me, she asked me about myself.

"You must tell me about yourself now," she said. "Just think, I have told you everything, and I don't even know who you are." She laughed a little. "I guess the moon has had its effect upon me, too," she said.

"Oh, I'm traveling for Uncle Sam," I lied. "Leaving for the States tomorrow. But this isn't the end. We'll see each other again." God, it was hard!

I left early in the morning. For the rest of the night I paced my room like a madman until the little Jap came up to wake me. He asked if I had slept well!

I walked into tragedy, you say? Well, I've buried it, friend—except for once in a while, when I wish—I wish— But thank God for one thing. Here, read this letter. I received it in answer to one I wrote as soon as I got back here.

You see it says my brother regrets that I couldn't get my leave of absence—and that the sweet little wife is dead sorry I couldn't come.

No, my friend, she never knew.



S M O K E

By WILLIAM H. HAYNE

SPIRIT released from flame,
The ardency of fire,
Rising from earth to sky,
Dost thou aspire?

With changeful vapor fraught,
Dark-hued or softly bright,
Thou art the soul set free
Of heat and light.

SINS OF OMISSION

By JEAN LOUISE DE FOREST

"AND you will have a lovely long summer to rest in." Dr. Emma Thompson leaned over the sick girl and stroked back the heavy bronze hair from her forehead. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"To Wainscott, a country place," answered Mary, "to take charge of fifty fresh air children. I was only an assistant last year; now I shall be at the head and have an assistant myself."

"But you won't be able to go." Dr. Thompson spoke imperatively.

"Oh, I can't back out now. Cousin John has made all the arrangements."

"Is it he who is giving you your college course?" The physician drew up a chair beside the bed and sat down.

"Yes," replied the girl. A note of pride crept into her voice as she added: "He is a banker in New York, a very rich man. He does a great deal of good with his money. After mother died he wrote to me and said that he would fit me to become independent. I don't know what I would have done without him." Her pale little face flushed. "He is not even my own cousin," she went on. "He is only my mother's cousin."

"And has he found you employment every summer?"

"Yes. He didn't want me to feel dependent. I earned quite a little that way, and I did so enjoy spending what was my very own. Don't you think I shall be strong enough to go to Wainscott?" Mary's face grew anxious.

"You really ought not to go back to your studies this year," returned the physician. "I think I will write to your cousin myself and explain matters."

"Oh, please don't." Mary raised a frightened face. "I should be ashamed

to ask for any more, after he has done so much already."

Dr. Thompson laughed and kissed her. She had grown to love this frail little morsel of a girl with her big, anxious, brown eyes.

"Don't fret, honey," she replied. "I know just exactly what to write. What did you say his name is?"

"John Winton—but please, please, don't write," persisted the girl. "He will think me so forward."

"John Winton!" exclaimed Dr. Thompson. "Not the man who presented the library to Carbury and gave two million dollars to charity in New York?"

"Yes," said Mary proudly.

"Why, everybody knows him! You don't mean to tell me that you are not willing to ask a man as rich as he is for one small summer, when it may mean a whole lifetime of health to you! You dear little goose! Why he himself would resent it if I neglected to tell him just how you are. Leave it to me."

For a moment the girl resisted, then she gave a satisfied and yielding sigh. "All right," she said, "if you are sure it is best."

At the moment of the arrival of Dr. Thompson's letter John Winton was seated at his desk, busy in rounding up a long day's work. It was nearly seven o'clock, and the office was deserted save for himself and his confidential clerk, a tall, slender young fellow, with big dark eyes and the face of a Botticelli Madonna. Winton was dictating rapidly, and Melville's pencil flew over his pad. Suddenly the telephone at Winton's elbow broke in upon their preoccupation, and over the wires sang a sweet

voice. "Aren't you almost ready to come home, daddy? You promised not to work so hard, you know."

"Yes, I know, pet," the wires carried back, "but a lot of business came up unexpectedly. I'll be home in half an hour." As the man turned again to his dictation there was a smile about his lips and a softness to his entire face, while a sympathetic response showed itself on that of the clerk.

"There—that's over," said Winton finally. "Get these off the first thing tomorrow. Now let me run over that last batch of mail."

Melville gathered up a package of letters that lay on his desk and handed them to his chief. As he did so he coughed—a prolonged, racking cough. Winton looked at him sharply, and noticed for the first time the pallor of the sunken cheeks, the dampness of the brow and the hollow chest. As his comprehensive gaze swept over the young man, a score of incidents, scarcely noted at the time, ranged themselves before his mind's eye. Melville must have a vacation. He was too valuable a cog in the mechanism to lose.

"Why, my dear fellow," said Winton, laying his hand affectionately upon Melville's arm, "you are tired out. I really believe that I've about used you up in that fight against the W. & N. But we won, didn't we?" He laughed, and Melville laughed, too, a pale echo of his own. "Now you are to have a vacation—a real one. I'm going to send you to an old relative of mine in the South to recuperate, for three months, at least."

For an instant the clerk made no answer; then a flush crept over his face and moisture dimmed his eyes. He held out his hand and grasped that of his employer. "How can I thank you, Mr. Winton? It is true that I am not well. My physician said I must go South or else—" His voice broke. "But can you spare me?"

"Yes, indeed," Winton said. "I decided today to go abroad myself for three or four months. There will be nothing for you to do here except to forward my mail. I want you to just loaf

and eat and sleep. You must go to my physician and be examined. I will pay all the expenses of the trip, and your salary will go on just the same. Suppose I 'phone Dr. Hartley now? You might stop in at his office on your way home."

Winton took up the telephone and talked for a few minutes. "Hartley will see you in an hour." The banker turned again to his mail. Letter after letter he tossed aside—advertisements, appeals for aid and the like, culling out from among them his private correspondence. When at last he reached a tinted envelope superscribed in a neat round hand, he turned it over before opening it to look at the postmark and gave a little surprised grunt. He read it through, his face impassive.

"I sent the last hundred dollars to my cousin, Miss Scott, about two weeks ago, didn't I?"

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk.

When Melville left he took with him to mail on his way out this letter:

DR. EMMA THOMPSON,
DEAR MADAM:

Allow me to express my appreciation of the interest you have shown in acquainting me with my cousin's condition, which I trust will not prove as serious as appears to you at present. Mary has always seemed to me a strong, healthy girl, and I have no doubt that she will recover rapidly from her ailment.

I must say frankly, however, that I cannot agree with you that a year of idleness would prove beneficial. I have fitted Mary, at considerable expense, to earn her living and to become independent. The course you suggest would inevitably lead to a letting down of ideals and a general unfitness for her station in life.

Of course if Mary has any disease I will see her cared for; but as it is she is convalescent, and I feel that the work among the fresh air children will give her just the outdoor exercise she needs, besides providing her with a small income, which she can have the satisfaction of feeling she has earned.

Happiness, I take it, should never be made an object in itself. At best, it must be the natural flower of duty well performed.

Sincerely,

JOHN WINTON.

As the door closed upon his clerk the banker settled himself in his chair, lighted a cigar and gave himself up to a contemplation of the room. There was nothing gaudy about it—but every bit of woodwork, every piece of leather bore

a message to the connoisseur. It was a costly room and epitomized his success, success gained in strict accordance with the law of the survival of the fittest—many unfit ones had crossed his path and had been trampled under foot. At length his gaze fell upon Dr. Thompson's letter, open upon the desk at his elbow, and he picked it up and ran through it again.

As he read, a frown formed itself between his eyes. He began to construct an image of what the physician of a girls' college must be like—bony of course, gray-haired no doubt, and spectacled, a failure in the active world outside washed at last by the tide of progress into the seclusion of an institution of learning. "Of course," he read, "having done so beautiful an act in educating your cousin, you must of necessity wish to give her every chance for recovery." Stilted sentimental phrases! Maudlin old maid! Then followed the absurd proposition to give Mary one free, happy year before she began to teach.

There rose up in him the self-made man's innate dislike to having his hand forced. But at the same time he wanted to justify himself in the eyes of the physician, bony and gray-headed and spectacled though she might be. He might have enclosed a cheque for twenty-five dollars, but Melville had gone with the letter. It was too late, and Winton was not the man to change. No, he must stick to his attitude, but he must make it plausible. He sat down before the typewriter and ticked off a letter to his cousin. As he wrote, he was conscious of a distinct aversion to the girl, something he had never felt before. What he did of his own free will was one thing, but he hated to have obligations thrust upon him from the outside.

II

WHEN little Dr. Thompson received in her morning's mail a long business-like envelope bearing in the upper corner the name of a prominent New York banking firm she gave an exclamation of pleasure.

"What is it?" asked Miss McKay. She sat in one corner of the office rolling bandages. There was to be a basket ball game in the afternoon and bandages would be at a premium.

"He has answered by return mail. It must be a nice, kind letter about Mary or he wouldn't write so soon. He is probably worried." She ran her paper cutter through one corner of the envelope and took out the typed sheet.

As she read a puzzled frown puckered her brow. When she had finished she read the letter over again.

"What does he say?" Miss McKay asked.

"The poor child!" Dr. Thompson threw the letter on the table. "Read it for yourself. I might put a little feeling into it if I read it aloud; it hasn't any as it is."

Miss McKay read the letter and passed it back to the doctor. "I think that it is a very nice letter," she said. "He says he is willing to take care of her if she needs it. I never had anyone do as much for me. I think he has been very generous."

Dr. Thompson frowned. "It is all very well if you look at it that way. To my mind, though, the whole thing is a piece of arrant hypocrisy. That man has millions. He is donating money to charities by the hundred thousand. He thinks less of five hundred dollars than I do of five hundred cents. Suppose he *is* busy—suppose he *has* theories of life—suppose he *is* only her mother's cousin—it wouldn't have hurt him a bit to have sent two or three hundred dollars and said, 'Use it to the best advantage; get the girl well.' Even if he does believe that 'a year of idleness' as he expresses it, would 'let down her ideals,' he might have given her a happy, care-free summer, and he might have done it freely. Ugh! The letter is so unresponsive, so cold and formal and at the same time so Christian that it gives me a chill. I sha'n't let Mary see it, but I'll write him another, telling him very pointedly that she is too ill to have a lot of troublesome tenement children on her hands."

"All the same," persisted the nurse in

a flat, unemotional tone, "you can't expect people to take care of all their relatives. What claim has she on him?"

"None," flared the doctor. "None whatever, except the claim of common humanity, and that is just what he lacks. With his experience of life he must know that good health is the most necessary part of her equipment. When I write again, I will put it to him as a business proposition. I'll make him see that it will be to his advantage to start Mary on her life work—if it is to prove such, poor child—with a sound nervous system. A good rousing summer of fun and frolic may at least give her a start in the right direction—but she really needs a whole year without a book in sight."

"All the same," reiterated the nurse impassively, "if anyone of my relatives had paid my bills, I'd have been so grateful that I wouldn't have minded how he did it or what he said."

The doctor laughed as she glanced up into the fat, good-natured face.

"You voice the attitude of the world," she said. "It's a more or less logical attitude, so I suppose I can't convert you, but just let me tell you, my dear, fully as many lives are spoiled by coldness, by a failure to have the right thing done for them at the right time, as by actual neglect and outright bad treatment. It's a case of sins of omission. This idea that a strong personality can always conquer environment is a fairy tale. There's no legal right in the matter, of course. I've no doubt Mr. John Winton is the kind of man who can find a Bible verse to uphold his every act, still—in my eyes—he is a hypocrite and a brute. The mere fact that he has an opportunity to do the kind and generous thing, in a case where kindness and generosity count at their maximum value, establishes a responsibility."

Dr. Thompson pushed the letter into a pigeonhole, took her prescription pad and started on her rounds of inspection. When she reached Mary's room she found her lying white and quiet and relaxed. She was just about the last person in the world one would have

chosen to mother a lot of turbulent children. At the physician's entrance she smiled faintly.

"How are you today—sleepy?" Dr. Thompson sat down beside the bed and felt her pulse.

"Yes," replied the girl. "I don't remember ever being like this. It is an effort to move."

"Don't move, and don't talk. I want you to be tired. You must be tired a long time before you start to get well. It means that you are resting." Dr. Thompson laid her hand gently on the girl's head and Mary languidly placed her own hand over it.

"You don't know how good it is to have you looking out for me," she said. "Somehow I feel that everything will come out all right now."

"Of course it will," said the physician in a queer husky tone. She dashed her hand across her eyes—a physician has no right to cry, even though she be little and pink-cheeked.

"I wonder what Cousin John said when he received your letter?" went on Mary in a weak voice. "It was so good of you to write. I never could have done it myself, for he has given me so much already. It's a great deal to have your college bills paid."

The little doctor's eyes grew misty again as she glanced about the painfully neat room. It lacked every touch of girlishness that even a little money can give.

"Yes," she replied, "you are a very fortunate little girl, aren't you?" She stroked the clustering curls from the white, high forehead. She loved Mary Scott. There was a certain clinging childlikeness and wistful earnestness about the girl that made her different from the others. "Girls are too sophisticated nowadays," the doctor often thought, "too worldly wise." But Mary was neither—perchance she erred in the opposite direction. She accepted what her cousin saw fit to bestow upon her with all the gratitude of which she was capable, and she never dreamed of asking for more. It was such a beautiful surprise when Dr. Thompson came to her rescue, now that she had been ill,

and opened communication with her rich cousin. It seemed as if everything that had been pressing, pressing for so long had been suddenly lifted.

"I will leave you now," said the physician. "Sleep all you can. That is what you need most." She bent and kissed the girl, then tiptoed out of the room.

But an unkind fate was already busily at work in the shape of Mr. Winton's second letter. When Dr. Thompson an hour later stopped a moment to listen on her way past the room, she was amazed to hear a footfall within. She pushed open the door. In the middle of the floor stood the girl, fully dressed and to all appearances in her right mind.

"My dear child!" The physician sank into a chair. "What does this mean? Sit down—you are not able to stand."

Mary obeyed. There was a bright spot of color in each cheek. "I am really very much better," she said. "I wanted to surprise you."

"Well, you have succeeded," answered the physician drily. "It is not at all like you, dear, to disobey orders. Why did you get up without asking me?" Her gaze wandered about the room in search of a clue. At last she saw the letter lying on the desk.

"When did that come?"

"About an hour ago."

"Is it from your cousin?"

"Yes," said the girl.

"May I read it?"

"Yes," answered Mary.

The wicked cruelty of it all! Dr. Thompson raged helplessly as she read. Mr. John Winton had spread carefully over four typed pages an account of all he had done for his cousin during the past four years. There were neat columns of figures, which, to use the gentleman's own phrase, "spoke for themselves."

He was anxious, so he wrote, to have his cousin cultivate a "spirit of independence." He desired her, for her own "ultimate good" to exert her "will power," which was a "necessary factor in success." On it her "recuperation" would largely depend. He felt that the carrying-out of the plan set forth

in Dr. Thompson's letter would really be to work his cousin an injury. It would lessen her sense of responsibility and unfit her for her life work.

"You see," Mary broke in, "he was right. I did need to be braced up. I feel better already. I am ashamed that I let you write to him when he is so busy."

"It is only excitement," said the physician. "I want you to go to bed again."

"Really, I can't, Dr. Thompson." It was Mary's first bit of insubordination. "I feel better than for a long time." An obstinate expression came into her usually gentle face. "You see," she added, "I look almost well"—and she did.

III

WHEN Miss Thompson started on her first European trip she dropped the "Dr." from her name. The last five years had been hard ones, for in addition to the work demanded of her as college physician, she had undertaken regular practice in the town where the college was situated. And these five years had followed two equally hard years of hospital work. For some time she had planned to steal this one summer from her busy life and go to Europe. For three whole months she was to be plain "Miss" from the United States of America. But "plain" would scarcely be the adjective to apply, for she was only twenty-nine, and when she had given in to her yellow hair's rebellious desire to curl, she looked almost like one of her own college girls.

She felt an absurd sense of youth and gaiety and freedom as she sat in her steamer chair, wrapped in rugs, her smart green veil folded around her head and twisted about her neck like the stem of a flower. It seemed for the time being that she had really developed along the lines which her early friends had marked out for her, that of the conventional society butterfly. And she enjoyed the make-believe all the more for the comfortable assurance that it was reared upon the solid groundwork

of seven patient years of successful practice.

It seemed quite a pity that so young and so attractive a person should be taking the long journey alone, and it was not at all strange that John Winton, who with his sixteen-year-old daughter was en route for England, should seize the first opportunity afforded by steamer life for making himself acquainted with her. A gust of wind, a veil tangled about a pretty head, a magazine fluttering to the deck and toward the rail, grateful thanks—and the deed was done. Mr. Winton introduced himself and his daughter Marjorie. Miss Thompson introduced herself and the two parties, now merged into one, frankly took stock of each other.

A faint shade of inquiry overcast Winton's face at mention of "Miss Thompson," but it passed. He could not quite remember where he had heard it last. It had a familiar sound, but—there were so many by that name. As for the little physician, her heart gave a jump. If this thing had happened on the stage it might have been termed "stretching the long arm of coincidence until its joints cracked." How handsome he was! And he had the polish that only wide acquaintance with the world can give. So it was he who had dictated the callous, blighting letter that had routed Mary Scott out of her sick bed! How could such oppositions exist in one nature? Winton was a masterful man, secure in his position and in his possessions, chief among which was his lovely daughter. With the father's devotion to her, at least, Miss Thompson could find no fault.

"I am off for a real holiday," said Winton, stretching luxuriously in the steamer chair. "And I congratulate myself that I have earned it."

"Indeed you have, daddy dear." Marjorie patted the strong white hand that lay on the arm of the chair. "Just think, Miss Thompson, he works on papers and things every night until nearly morning. It scares me."

"Well, it's over now, pet—for a time, at least. We won't even think of work for months, will we?"

"No, indeed, daddy. I want to enjoy every minute we are gone, and the best fun in the world is having you with me."

The little physician saw an opening and rushed in headlong. "Fun, plain everyday fun, is the best tonic in the world," she said sententiously. "I always advise it for tired nerves."

Winton laughed. "You sound quite learned," he said. He smiled down at her as only a mature man can smile at a beautiful young woman. "I flatter myself that I have a pretty good specimen of that system right here." He pinched Marjorie's cheek.

Marjorie glanced brightly at the man and then at Miss Thompson. "I don't think I have ever been unhappy in my life. How could I be with such a father?" She slipped her hand into his. "But then," she added, "you don't look as though you had been either, Miss Thompson."

"I assure you that I have, my dear. I am unhappy this very moment over a little friend whom I left behind me in America. She has just graduated from college and is all broken down by overstudy." Had Winton been a man more given to details or more interested in his cousin, he must draw conclusions now. It was a risky thing to say, but he was studying her face with an eye to its color effects.

"She can't sleep, poor girl," went on Miss Thompson, addressing herself again to Marjorie, who proved a sympathetic listener. "Can you imagine anything more horrible than for a young girl not to sleep, to get up in the morning with her head tired and her limbs weary, as though she had just finished a long day's work?"

"Oh, I am so sorry for her." Marjorie's eyes dilated with pity. "Just once I lay awake all night with a toothache, and I was ill for days afterward."

"What can her parents be thinking of?" growled Winton. "That is the crying evil of our modern educational system. If I had my way no girl should go to college. Woman is not created for hard work of any kind, least of all brain work. Let her keep to the sphere for which nature intended her."

Miss Thompson smiled wickedly and gazed at the pink tips of her well-manicured hands. "I am a college woman," she said.

"You!" Winton acted the amazement he felt. "But you don't look it!"

"Am I to take that as a compliment?" Miss Thompson looked up demurely into his face. She smiled, but she could not let the subject drop.

"Some girls are not strong enough," she said—"grant you that; and others wear themselves out by overstudy. This poor little friend of mine is going to teach, and she has simply worked herself to death."

But Winton was tired of Miss Thompson's sick friend. "You can't claim any such record as that, can you, Marjorie?" he said. "Just look at the porpoises!"

The little doctor did not return to the subject that day.

It was pleasant to travel with congenial companions. She lay back contentedly in her steamer chair and watched the porpoises at play. Mary Scott slipped out of her mind for the time being. Winton breathed power, and his smile, when he chose to make it so, was beautiful. The little physician, fresh from her year's association with women, felt it keenly and responded to it. She felt that, had there been no Mary Scott, she would have liked him better than any man she had ever known. She found it necessary to assure herself over and over that this was all a pretense, a mask—the man was at heart a brute.

And Winton. Before he had known Miss Thompson two days he was vaguely conscious of a desire to please her, to say the things that brought out the dimples and the flash of white teeth. It was a slow steamer, eight days at the least, and eight days on shipboard equal eight weeks on land.

It is true that Miss Thompson, minus a vacation and the intimacy engendered by steamer life, might not have proved effective to arouse this widower's interest, but as it happened it was a case of the right woman in the right place at the right time. Winton was not in love,

of course—he would never have admitted that—but he had made up his mind nevertheless before the fourth day that he would marry Miss Thompson; she satisfied his taste and his understanding.

It was on the fifth day out that Miss Thompson again led up to the subject that lay so near her heart. There were only three or four days more. In that time she must get him to do something for the girl. They were standing together beside the rail in the stern of the ship. Miss Thompson sighed, a sigh of real nervousness, and began:

"I presume you think me foolish to dwell so much on what can't be helped, but my mind is filled today with the thought of that poor child back in America. I do wish I knew how she is standing the work."

"I don't consider you foolish in the least," said the man gently. "It is very sweet and natural in you." Miss Thompson was not inapt in the reading of men, and as he spoke John Winton's face was an open book. "What is her name?" he added.

"Suppose I give you a fictitious name." She had prepared for this. "Let us call her Daisy Washburn. It is hardly fair to give you her real name after discussing her so fully."

"Hasn't she anyone to look out for her?" he inquired sympathetically.

"No," she said; "she is an orphan. Some distant relatives helped her about her education, but she doesn't like to apply to them." Now he must guess, she thought to herself and trembled—but no.

"I have just educated a young cousin to be self-supporting," the man was saying, his voice filled with justifiable pride. "She is working now among the fresh air children, and enjoys it very much, I believe."

Miss Thompson grew hot with anger. Winton looked at her as though for approval, but she was studying the sky line.

"Is she robust?" she asked in a strained voice.

"Very," returned the man. "She had some slight ailment in the spring, but is well now."

"Doesn't that rather upset your theories of higher education for women?" she asked.

Winton laughed. "That is a question I shall not try to answer. I fitted Mary Scott to earn her living, and that seemed the best way."

"Has Marjorie ever wished for a sister?" queried his companion with seeming irrelevance, after a pause of several seconds.

"Yes, poor child," replied Winton.

"It has been bad for her to be so much alone. But she has needed most a mother." He added this last in a different tone, and to her anger and mortification the little physician felt that she blushed. Perhaps it was for that reason that considerable emphasis crept into her tone as she said:

"You might have adopted Mary Scott, or at least let her live with you."

For a moment there was a tense silence, during which Miss Thompson realized poignantly that Mr. Winton's domestic arrangements were none of her business. When he spoke again it was with a slight reserve.

"It really never occurred to me. Besides it would have unfitted her for her station in life."

"Station in life"—the words grated on the little physician's sensibilities. "Isn't she well born?" she inquired with suspicious innocence.

"Why, yes," said the man; "but she was left entirely without means."

"Oh!" she allowed a suggestion of disdain to creep into her tone. "It is a mere matter of money then?"

"Do you know," she went on, as the man made no reply, "I often entertain socialistic thoughts. When you come to consider it—what innate right has Marjorie or any other child of rich parents to money and love any more than a girl like Mary Scott, or like my poor little Daisy Washburn? Lovely and sweet as Marjorie is, she has probably done less to earn what she enjoys than the other two."

For an instant a slight expression of offense passed over Winton's face, but as he looked down into the violet eyes,

shaded by long black lashes, lashes that were gold at the roots, he laughed.

"You are quite a little iconoclast," he said. "I won't attempt to answer you there, either; it's the usual clash between theory and practice. But I tell you what I will do. When we reach England, let's cable back for my cousin and Daisy Washburn. They can join our party, and we will give them both a good time. We'll wait for them at the Cecil."

Miss Thompson gasped. The mental processes of this man, who was practically a stranger, were beyond her ken. Already he had appropriated her.

"But I am not in your party," she said. "I am going to spend the entire summer in England."

"Miss Thompson," said Winton, "I came out here this afternoon to lay a proposition before you, but I have rather anticipated myself. Before we left New York the governess who has been with Marjorie since her mother died, a capable and cultivated woman, was taken ill. We had no time to procure a suitable chaperon."

"That was unfortunate," murmured Miss Thompson, her heart beating fast.

"Marjorie is very much alone," Winton went on, "with a mere man for companion. I wondered whether I might induce you to join our party as our guest or Marjorie's chaperon, whichever you like." Winton floundered as Miss Thompson looked away. "Will you?" he pleaded. "We need you so much."

"Yes," she replied, looking into his face, "yes, if Mary Scott and Daisy Washburn join us, I can act as chaperon."

IV

"We should have a cablegram tomorrow morning at the latest," said Winton. "I am quite looking forward to their arrival. I hope that nothing will prevent." His voice was resonant with good humor and he looked absurdly young for a man of forty-five.

"And I, too," added Marjorie. "I have never seen Mary, but I know I

shall love her. Father is always doing such beautiful things for everyone, Miss Thompson. Just before we left home he sent his secretary South for all summer, up in the mountains where it is lovely and cool."

"Oh, it was nothing," he said. "He was breaking down, poor fellow. He is the most remarkable clerk I ever had. I suppose that there is not much credit due me for saving his life. He was on the verge of consumption."

Something tightened about Miss Thompson's heart. That moment of self-forgetfulness on Winton's part, of self-questioning, drew her to the man more strongly than all his success and masterliness had done. Perhaps, after all, it was only awakening that he needed. Perhaps she might be the appointed means. She found her resentment melting away before the deep, tender and yet troubled glance with which he regarded her.

After dinner she went to her room, where she rummaged among her writing materials until she found the letter which she had received from him before she left America. She read it through line for line. She could scarcely associate the cold, unfeeling, blighting thing with the man downstairs—yet he had written it; it was part of himself—as truly a part of himself as was this warm generosity.

"I have something to tell you, Mr. Winton," she began after a while. She seated herself rather primly in a straight high-backed chair. It was not easy—this unburdening of her own sins. "I have deceived you a little—about Daisy Washburn. I am—"

A comical look of concern spread itself over Winton's face. He realized how completely and unexplainably he had trusted this unknown woman. "I am—" she began again. At this moment a messenger appeared, accompanied by a bellboy.

"Mr. John Winton?" he queried in a voice raucous from much shouting.

"Yes," replied Winton. The messenger handed him a cablegram.

"From my lawyer probably. Now let's see how nearly ready the child is to

start." He opened the envelope and gave a start.

"What is the matter? Isn't it from Mary?"

"No," he replied in a strange voice, "not from Mary. Mary is dead. She died yesterday of brain fever."

"Dead!" she echoed, as though unable to grasp the meaning of the word. "Oh, I told you that she needed a rest!" she burst out passionately. "If you had been kinder, more human, this would not have happened. It is you who have killed her."

The man grew white. "What do you mean? Who are you? What have I to do with Mary Scott's death? I did all I could for her." His voice trembled.

"Daisy Washburn and Mary Scott were the same girl. I am Dr. Emma Thompson. I have your cruel letter upstairs in my room. I have just read it. I implored you to take care of the child. I told you her condition. You wrote 'Happiness should be the flower of duty well performed.' Death is what that poor child reaped."

Winton's eyes burned. They seemed to have sunk into his head. He forgot to be surprised. He was on the defensive for the first time in his life. He loved this woman, and he knew that he had lost her. In her eyes he was a murderer.

"But I said I would take care of her if she needed it."

"Yes, you said it," she returned bitterly; "you said it as though every word had been ground out of you by a machine. What right had you to 'ifs'? I told you her condition. One kind word, one spark of interest, would have made it possible for her to rest. The letter you wrote her put her in a fever. It got her up out of bed and back to her studies. It hounded her to her death. With your millions given to charity and your libraries given to towns and your organs given to churches, what are you, but a buyer of public favor? You sent your clerk to the mountains to save him for your own advantage, but for that same end how many lives have you crushed out?"

Miss Thompson sat rigidly before

him with burning cheeks, her hands grasping the arms of her chair. At her words there clutched at Winton's heart something akin to terror. His arms sought the table that stood by his chair, and his head dropped upon them as though to shut out the sight of that other self that stood gaunt and specter-like before him, stripped of the pitiful foppery with which a silly world had clothed it. Murderer, oppressor, thief! The accusing words, spoken only in the chambers of his own soul, echoed and

re-echoed, for the world of business gives new names to old realities, and until now he had neglected realities.

"If I have been cruel," said Miss Thompson more gently as she looked at the bowed head, "forgive me. I loved Mary Scott. It was for her sake I promised to join your party. Tomorrow I shall go on my own way as I planned." She rose dizzily, and Winton, looking haggard and old, rose too.

"Good night," said the little physician.

"Good night," replied the man.



IN EXILE

By ROSALIE ARTHUR

TODAY a breath of something faint and rare,
Elusive, subtly sweet,
Borne on the floating wing of April's air
Brushed past me in the street.

So clear the lovely vision that it brought,
I saw, with new amaze,
The quickened bough whose miracle had wrought
Spring's tender haze.

Above the city's turmoil and unrest
There rose a robin's note
That blended with the sorrow, half confess'd,
From plaintive bluebird's throat.

Oh, fair mirage! Here in the busy mart
I tread a beaten track,
But to the pathless wild my rebel heart
Turns ever back!



AFTER a man has had a perfectly killing time he is usually dead broke.

IN A VEST POCKET GARDEN

By ANNIE E. P. SEARING

A tiny garden close is mine,
A handkerchief of green and bloom
So small our hands might almost clasp
Across the leafy room.

And yet so vast my garden is,
Such vistas there of fruit and flower,
It holds the magic of the spring,
The miracle of Eden's bower.

THE girl finished copying the loose leaf into the letter she was writing and leaned back to dream into the distant prospect that was spread out before her.

Far away from her eyrie stretched the Tuscan hills, each crowned with its tiny walled town, whose armies of investment were now but besieging hosts of green ilex that mounted and pushed up every gray stone escarpment. But in her homesick eyes was a farther vision that reached out beyond rolling hills and green valleys and the waste of ocean to the land of her birth, where for her yearning dwelt freedom and the joys of young companionship and love. She had but to turn her head to where the lilylike Mangia Tower soared into the bluest of blue skies, to remind herself that she was in Siena. There was beauty wherever her eye could fall, and she was out of sorts with all of it. The pages of her letter fluttered on the table before her and she put out her hand to keep them down.

"I could not possibly," were the words on which her fingers rested, "make you understand half the charm of this miniature roof garden of mine, whose flowers and vines and shrubs are rooted in boxes, tubs and jars. Jasmine and ivy run riot over the arbor so that we seldom need pull the awning to shade us from the sun, and such blossoms does

my gardening produce! We breakfast and lunch out here—or rather I do. Mamma often stops in bed until after luncheon. But I have the parrot to talk to, though he speaks so much purer Tuscan than I do that he puts me to the blush, and my lark in the wicker cage on the wall, and sometimes Signora Poggi's yellow cat comes to sit by me while I read or sew or do my lessons in Italian. But of late I have taken rather an aversion to the cat, because he looks so like someone I don't like. I dare say it is horrid, but when he sits down with a soft deliberation and looks at me with that fixed stare, licking the milk off his chops after his breakfast, he is so like the Marchese that I fairly detest him—poor puss! The Marchese's sparse mustache sticks straight out just like the cat's whiskers, too.

"Such a view as there is from my tiny Garden of Eden, my dear! One sees the world—all the Italian world of the middle ages at least, when men flew at each other's throats for a word, or rode against those very hill towers I can see as I write, to rescue or to avenge the women they loved. If there were only one to rescue me! There must be a serpent in every Eden, and mine is the Marchese, though he is, after all, more like a besieging force that has come to batter down my citadel—at any rate I am convinced that resistance is hopeless. I hear you saying, 'How absurd,' and 'pishing' and 'pshawing,' but, my dear Sarah, *you don't really know mamma!* I'm a fatalist where she is concerned. There has never, in my experience, been a thing that she set her heart on doing or having that hasn't somehow come about. It may be a kind of ob-

session of mine, but I do believe that what she wills I shall inevitably do. I know when she looks at me in that fixed inscrutable way of hers that never explains, never fully lets you into anything that she is thinking, that however I may resist, in the end I shall yield without a word—like one hypnotized. Unquestionably she has made up her mind that I am to marry the Marchese, and between the two of them I believe I shall, much as I now shudder at the idea. He never invaded the garden till recently, but now he comes to tea nearly every afternoon with mamma, and he sits there sipping and staring till I feel as if I could go suddenly mad and jump over the wall. That would be particularly horrid, for the plunge would be five stories, and I should mess up the poor Contessa's terrace, and she's not to blame!

"All this, of course, is strictly confidential, my dear Sally. (Whom can one use as safety valve if not one's best friend?) I would not for worlds untold have any eyes but yours see the wretched little verses I send you, nor know this terrible thing that my mother is plotting."

Sarah Coleby read the letter through as she sat at breakfast with her brother, and then, even while her coffee cooled in its cup, she read every word of it aloud to him from beginning to end.

"That woman's a devil!"—Malcolm Coleby set his square jaw—"an unmitigated she-devil!"

"No"—his sister's tone was impartial—"not quite that. But she is thoroughly selfish through and through. If she wasn't, she wouldn't keep that poor girl cooped up over there, an exile from her friends, to company with cats and parrots just to enable her to indulge her laziness which she is pleased to call invalidism. She can be waited on hand and foot if she stays in Italy, and live in a sort of luxury on her widow's annuity, while, if she came home, she'd have to get about and help herself. Of course I don't need to call your attention to the fact that things wouldn't be as they are if you had had the courage of your convictions or feelings and

had asked Isabel to marry you last summer when they were over here and we were all together every blessed week end!"

"I think I see myself! Ask her to come and do her own work in a Harlem flat and starve on a newspaper man's salary? A man can't ask a pearl among women to share his squalor."

His sister looked across at him for a moment before she spoke, and then she snipped off her words as if she were cutting them with the scissors.

"For a rather clever fellow, Malcolm, you talk remarkably like a fool. I suppose you think it less 'squalid' for her to marry this slimy old marquis than to come and share alike with us two. Well, she should at least have her choice—she's got brains enough to decide for herself. No use to waste words over it; what do you intend to do about it?"

Malcolm Coleby knew his sister so well that he also knew that some sort of answer must materialize before she would give the matter up. They had not been battling with the world together since leaving college without establishing a pretty close understanding of each other.

"I seem to remember," she said, as she put down her cup and pushed back her chair, "those shoulders of yours, and your shock head butting into a wall of men on the football field with some effect. Of course I make no suggestions—but I do call your attention to the fact that you have not taken the vacations you were entitled to for four years, and that each of us has that thousand-dollar rainy day fund in the bank. If this isn't a rainy day, then I don't know a deluging downpour when I see one, that's all! I know what I'd do if I were a man, and in your shoes—I'd go straight to her and I'd fetch her back with me if I had to tear her from that old serpent's very coils! Oh, tell her everything, paint the picture in its darkest colors." She waved away his disclaimers as she clicked the lid of her watch and got up to go. "Reveal all. Four flights of stairs to climb and the wash pulled out of the kitchen window on a pulley line! If I know Isabel McMurtry she'll take

you—even with your grouch against fate thrown in! Anyway, I shall go myself to the rescue if you don't."

"It isn't so!" The truth of her accusation stung him to swift denial. "I don't cherish a grouch—but any fellow would get discouraged when the meanness of these old dividend drawers keeps him from asking the girl he loves to marry him. And it's all very well for you to talk—you couldn't go and leave that work of making and marring literary fortunes. Oh, you rising sub-editor!"

"Pstchut!" This was an indescribable noise she had a way of making when she implied contempt for delayed action. "I'd 'chuck' my job!" Then she whisked disdainfully out of the room.

It was about a fortnight after that that Isabel was tying up vines in her garden, and something the parrot was saying over and over made her pause with the shears in her hand.

"E lo mio amore se n'è ito a Siena—lo mio amore—lo mio amore—"

He was cocking his silly head as he stepped along the balustrade as far as his chain would allow. His plumage of red and white and blue was what had originally prompted his purchase and given him his name of "Uncle Sam." As he moved sidling along now, chuckling after each repetition of the line of verse, he was so like a clown that his mistress could bear no more. Yesterday at tea time the Marchese had recurred with his usual regularity and Isabel had had to sit and listen while he read his detestable love poetry to her mother and leered slyly over the page at her. Faugh! And now Uncle Sam had caught a phrase that he would keep on repeating till it made her sick. She dropped the shears, and snatching the twine ball from her apron pocket, flung it at him angrily. The parrot ducked his head with an indignant squawk and the ball went down through outer space. Then she got down from her chair to wander about the little outdoor room disconsolate.

Her work was done; she had fussed over her mignonette boxes, petted her

promising array of pelargoniums, snipped, dug and tied until every leaf and blossom was in place. She was bored to death, and this glorious morning going to waste. Her mother was staying in bed until noon; Amelia was too busy to do more than answer "*Si, signorina*" or "*Bene, bene, eccellenza*" and turn away to her duties, if she ventured to stop her for a word. The Signora Poggi did not come until twelve, and then they would walk primly for an hour till the time for *colazione*—always the same streets, a few shops to do her mother's errands and then home. A drive in the afternoon, if mamma felt up to it, and after that tea (probably with the Marchese present) and double solitaire in the evening or letters, when she could creep away to her own room while her mother entertained tiresome people with their everlasting scandal-mongering. Never the slightest freedom, for a girl of her class might not go as far as the nearest street corner unattended by a chaperone. She felt as much a prisoner as Uncle Sam tied there by his leg and now muttering and croaking his complaints, or as the lark in his wicker cage. He was singing at the moment, a soft little memory of wide skies and poppy-starred meadows in the Val d'Este.

"I will not bear it another minute!" she said to herself. "I will go out and walk in the country by myself!"

She ran to her room, and seizing hat and gloves and parasol, she slipped softly out at the entrance door of the apartment and down the great stone stairway to the inner court of the old palace on the top floor of which they lived, and out through the iron gate to the street. Looking quickly up and down the narrow way, she breathed a sigh of relief. No one in sight as she bowed her head to adjust her veil. When she raised her eyes again, her heart fell to beating a wild tattoo, for down the echoing stone-paved street came the Marchese, with yellow gloves and twirling cane. There was a pause, a surprised lifting of his hat, and he stood still in front of her as if to block her way.

"*Bon giorno*, signorina—but surely the signorina is not alone?"

The signorina was alone, and rather haughty about it and quite ready to pass on.

"Yes? But allow me—I am at your service—I beg to accompany you, to protect you."

"Certainly not." There was no mistaking the acidity of that refusal. "I wish to be alone."

She escaped him, almost running to get away and fairly sickened at the sentimental moistening of his eyes at her rebuff. When she turned her head at the corner, the street between the high palaces was empty. He must have gone in at their entrance to tell on her—the chatterer! She went all the faster to get what she could of the blessed air of freedom while she had it. Across the Piazza del Campo she hurried, where some young men lounging on the steps of the Palazzo Pubblico stared in amazement at the spectacle of a lady, young and unattended, out so early in the day, a thing unheard of unless an intrigue was afoot. At the Fonte Branda, where the women were stooping to wash in the gray fluid that did duty in the laundering of Siena's clothes, more than one shrill chatter was hushed at the strange sight of the slim young figure in a smart American gown swinging along so fast—where? A lady would not walk for the pleasure of it when she could as well ride—it was incredible. No doubt there was scandal in it somewhere—depend upon it. Dark tales of their betters, as they kneeled on the stones to rinse and wring and slap, were exchanged.

But Isabel cared not a whit as she went out through the city gate to the open country. Why bother one's head about the prejudices of the Italian nobility or the scandalmongering of the peasants, while Italian sunshine was pouring its gold over the matchless fields of this flower-decked Tuscany? The men of the *octroi* guard eyed her with a smiling insolence, and she wasn't sure but that one of them addressed her; but she hurried on unheeding. Once out beyond the city wall she had an intoxicating sense of freedom. Her light feet

fairly flew over the road toward San Gimignano, and she chuckled joyously. Once where the road went over a tiny bosoming hill she startled a bird from her nest under the wayside hedge, and there were five little eggs in a downy cup. A hare ran across her path and any number of squirrels. There were poppies and field lilies and yellow *escolchias* everywhere far and wide spread out with the lavish touch of the Tuscan summer. When a cart drawn by the huge-horned Siena oxen creaked by, she answered the laughing greeting of the peasants with gay replies.

As she sat there on her roadside boulder there came a rattle of wheels from behind, and a little victoria clattered past, such as always stand for hire in the public square. It was drawn by a bony horse driven at a canter, and in it sat a young army officer, the plumes of his Bersagliere hat and the smoke from his cigar flowing out behind as he sat with his feet on the opposite seat. As he passed the girl he threw her an impudent stare. A little farther down the road the carriage stopped and he got out and came back. Isabel rose to her feet as she saw him coming, uncertain whether to resume her way or to turn again toward the town. It was too late—she could not avoid him in either case, and so she stood like some timid trapped creature while he bent over her urging her to get in and ride with him. As she shrank under the insult of his presence no less than his words, she was aware of someone coming rapidly from the direction of the city.

"*Grazie—mille grazie, signore*"—the suave tones of the Marchese fell upon her ear, as if he had dropped from the sky—"but the signorina has no need of the gracious offer of your carriage. The signorina takes the air on foot for her health—by the doctor's orders, in fact, and under my protection."

The scowling young officer had stood at this interruption, hand on his sword hilt, ready to resent an interference with his adventure. He certainly did not believe one word of what the Marchese said, but something in the older man's face and bearing showed him that even

the insolence of the military could no farther go with safety. There evidently was more here than met the eye, so he took his cue and assumed a new manner. Bowing low from his dapper little waist he backed away and left them standing side by side.

"I was placing the carriage at the disposal of the signora—permit me now to include also her—*protector!*"

If there was covert insolence in that, the Marchese, with the tact of his race and class, chose to ignore it.

"A thousand thanks again, signore; it is quite unnecessary;" and bowing as low, he tucked Isabel under his arm and marched her off cityward. As they went along her heart left off its beat of fear at last and swelled with the raging sense that she was now caught beyond recall in the clutch of her detested suitor. For had he not spied, followed, rescued her? The air of newly cemented proprietorship in her that seemed to be symbolized in their attitude as they walked arm in arm roused her to frantic rebellion. As always when the Marchese was most in evidence, she saw nothing but Malcolm Coleby's splendor of young strength in contrast to his Italian effeminacy, and with a sigh that was half a sob she pulled her arm away. She would at least walk her way alone—he should not touch her—yet!

"You may speak to me freely, signorina, without offense, of what is in your heart—but you must not grieve. It is an episode—it is gone—let us forget it."

Clearly he thought she had been guilty of an escapade; he was even forgiving her!

"Oh, I hate you Italian men!" she burst out half crying. "Even you, in your way of helping me—you are detestable. I know a man that is a man—he would not have smoothed it over—he would have knocked that beast down!"

The Marchese smiled with a rueful shrug. "Different countries, different customs, signorina. Your friend is an American, no doubt, and young? An admirer—or perhaps a lover? He would not perhaps understand the best way to guard a young lady here from public

discussion—from scandal. Believe me, *signorina cara*, this is the better way."

"Oh, talk, chatter, always chatter and scandal! Who cares? I am sick of it all!"

"It is the world, *poverina mia*. I regret it, but our world is like that. Ladies who are young and beautiful like yourself do not walk out alone—you know that. A word, a hint—it runs like fire in the dry grass, and puff—if she were an angel she is consumed!"

"I don't care—I tell you, I don't care any more! I will not submit to be shut up in a cage any longer! I want to get out—I *will* get out!"

"But the signorina has always her garden, *il bel giardinnetto!*"

They were close to the city gate now and he had taken her arm again. The lounging guards were all deference, for they recognized the Marchese, and there was something so funny to the girl in his foppish figure covered with dust, his cane, his tall hat and the yellow gloves as he gravely recommended the *bel giardinnetto* for her exercise and recreation that she threw back her head and laughed aloud with the tears still damp on her cheeks.

"Ah," he nodded smiling, "it is well—*bene, bene*—they see us gay. It will be discussed in twenty Siennese homes to-night at the least count, this little adventure of ours; and I would not have them think you came with me unwillingly."

Amelia met them at the door of the apartment with a face of horror. Thanks to the Madonna the signorina had come back! The Signora Poggi had come at the usual hour to take the signorina for her daily promenade, and lo, she was not to be found! But she, Amelia, had been too clever to tell the awful truth that her young lady had left the house—oh, no, trust her for that! She had packed the Poggi off with an excuse, and she was but this moment wringing her hands to think that she must go and disturb the signora with the terrible news!

Isabel brushed past her with a curt order. "I am going to my room, and I am not to be called. No, I want no

lunch—you are not to knock on my door; tell mamma I have a headache." Such a to-do with these fools—one would think she had jumped over the parapet!

The Marchese twirled his mustache as he fixed Amelia with his compelling stare.

"Make my compliments to the signora, and say that I had the honor to accompany the signorina on her morning walk, and that I regret that a slight touch of the sun has affected her for the moment. Undisturbed rest is all she needs to be completely restored."

So it must be settled. As Amelia went back to her kitchen, she was already planning a gown for *festas*, which she would buy out of the fees that flowed at the time of a wedding. She was not born yesterday, she said to herself, and she had had her eyes about her for some time past.

As for poor little Isabel, she gave herself up to the luxury of crying her eyes out, and spent most of the day in the process. Oh, Malcolm, Malcolm, if it had only been you to the rescue! Should she ever see him again? She felt that she could have gone to him even now, have told him that she knew perfectly well how he loved her and was too proud to ask her to share his poverty, could have thrown herself on his generosity and begged him to let her come and be poor with him and Sarah, if it had not been for her mother! Half a world of distance and the ocean rolling between them were as nothing to cross compared with that wall in mamma's eyes. Deep down in that inscrutable gaze was the real barrier of her imprisonment. It was useless to fret or rebel; she felt the iron purpose binding her like a chain. Sooner or later one must submit to mamma. She was inevitable, inexorable, like fate.

Waking out of an exhausted sleep, hunger-driven, Isabel got up finally to dress for dinner, and found a note that had been slipped under her door. It was from her mother. "I have gone to have tea *al fresco* along with the Dudley-Dalrymples, who are here for a few days only. We are driving out to Belcaro;

it is the Marchese's party, and I am sorry that your obstinacy has kept you shut in your room, as he planned it largely for your pleasure. But he would on no account have you disturbed."

At dinner mother and daughter were alone, and the silence between them fairly tingled with things waiting to be said. Isabel felt an impending doom in the air. She kept saying over and over to herself: "Now it is coming; she is going to speak; she will make me promise! She always bears me down with her reasonableness; I shall yield—but oh, dear heaven, not yet—let it be not yet!"

But her mother did not speak until the coffee had been placed on the table in the garden. She sat there under the drowsy scent of the jasmine vine, carefully stirring her two lumps, and her rings flashed in the rosy light that fell from the red globe framed in black lace of Siennese ironwork suspended above her. Isabel had walked to the parapet and stood looking away to the hills, beyond which rolled the long Tuscan valleys and then the dividing ocean.

"I wish," said Mrs. McMurtry, "that you would come and sit down, Isabel. There is something very important to us both that I have to speak to you about. It has been under consideration for a long time past, but your very unfortunate attitude toward the Marchese has made it very difficult, even painful, to discuss it."

The girl turned at her mother's words, and came slowly and stood near to her, lacing and unlacing her slim fingers nervously. She had been thinking of Malcolm so intensely that her body and soul, the very air she was breathing, seemed instinct with him. No, she could not bear to hear it at such a moment.

"Not tonight, please," she cried, "not tonight! I know what you are going to say, and I can't bear it just yet. Tomorrow—will not tomorrow do?"

Her mother finished her coffee and put down the cup. Then she lifted her glasses and looked at her daughter with a cool scrutiny as if she were some curious but imperfectly apprehended article of *verru*.

"Tomorrow I shall remain in bed until after luncheon—this has been a very fatiguing day for me; but if you prefer to wait, very well."

"Thank you"—this a little breathlessly. "Till tomorrow then, and if you like, at three, just before the tea hour. You see, there will be plenty of time in the years to come, mamma—" Her voice broke as she moved toward the house door. "Surely you can let me off till then—tomorrow at three. Good night."

All that next morning Isabel worked in her garden with a feverish devotion to each miniature task. She fed her birds; she attended to the wants of Uncle Sam, while he jeered and mocked at her. She pruned; she tied; she raked and hoed with her little tools in pot and box; she even played with the yellow cat, making balls for his jumping delight. "Nothing," she said to herself, "will ever be the same again after today. This is my Day of Fate—let me live over all my little joys here in my garden before mamma blasts them forever!"

She lunched from the little tray Amelia brought her to the wicker table, and when that was over she dressed and then came back to wander here and there, a gauzerobed figure in pink, touching and wondering what to enjoy in the little hour before her Eden must be given over to the serpent. She was stooping above a jar of white bloom, caressing, sniffing, when she heard the outer door slam. A visitor so early? Then someone was shown into the *salon*—had Amelia gone to mamma? Surely she knew the answer would be "not at home." There was a movement, a step on the doorsill that gave on the terrace. She looked up from her flowers—and there stood Malcolm Coleby! A gesture, a glad cry—youth love needs no words—and they were in each other's arms. Wrapped in that close embrace the whole story was told, and whether it took minutes or hours they neither knew nor cared. It was Amelia who at last disturbed them, and she was ushering a guest.

"The Marchese!" Isabel's whisper only served to make Malcolm stand his ground with his arm still around her as

he turned the menace of his thundercloud eyes on the nobleman, who stood bowing. It was certainly in his social scheme an unheard-of situation, but nothing ever disconcerted the Marchese for long. His suave courtesy always made the most startling incongruities seem the usual and the ordinary.

"Ah, the young athlete from overseas! Surely this is he of whom you spoke this morning with eloquence, signorina—he who would—how did you call it—'knock the beast down!' Am I to be allowed the honor then of congratulating this gentleman?"

Isabel had by this time extricated herself, red with confusion, and was effecting an introduction of the two men, when a diversion was created by the appearance of the hostess; and behind her came Amelia staggering under the tea tray. Mrs. McMurtry chose to ignore any embarrassment in the air, as with her cool, languid scrutiny she put out her hand to Malcolm.

"Very glad, I'm sure. No idea you were on this side. When, pray, did you arrive?"

She sat down, after just touching fingers with his, in the chair which the Marchese had been adjusting for her in front of the urn. Then she turned her elaborately coiffured head to the servant hovering with a quivering curiosity on the outskirts, and nodded her away. She would have gone on indifferently to her tea making, moving her beringed white fingers in and out among the cups, but the young man's next words with a definite reply to what had been a purely perfunctory question arrested her attention. He stood glowering.

"I landed last night in Genoa, and have come on here as fast as their miserable railway system could bring me to ask your daughter to marry me."

Mrs. McMurtry picked up the lorgnette which hung from a curiously wrought chain about her neck and snapped it open. She looked through it long and searchingly, first at Malcolm, then at Isabel, whose pink slimness stood shrunk against the arbor pillar, and back again at Malcolm.

"May I ask if this is a request for my daughter's hand? Or am I to regard it merely as an announcement?"

There was something so caustically indifferent in her manner that it stung him to fresh defiance.

"You may regard it as you please, but it is an announcement. I have asked her already, and she is mine." There was a fine ring of triumph in this statement, but his next words he hurled as a sort of challenge to the Marchese, who stood twirling his little mustache at his hostess's back. "What's more, I don't mean to go away again and leave her here."

Isabel was crying now, and Malcolm strode across and put a defending arm about her shaking shoulders. Her mother turned to inspect the Marchese with a puzzled stare, as if she sought in him the solution of a mystery.

"It's all very astonishing," she said in her even, unruffled tones, "this inexplicable abruptness—one could almost call it violence. I've no objection whatever to your marrying my daughter if she wants you. In fact, it makes it easier to announce my own marriage, which Isabel has made so difficult to me because of the utterly unreasonable antagonism she has chosen to assume

toward the gentleman who has done me the honor to ask my hand—the Marchese."

"Oh!" came from the girl in a gasping cry. "And I thought— Then it was mamma that he wanted all the time—not me at all!"

The Marchese smiled a bland indulgence toward her as he shrugged his compunction at the repudiation of such an idea.

"My dear signorina, what a desolating misunderstanding! You are of an undoubted loveliness, my dear young lady—*veramente bella*; but as for me, I have laid myself and my fortune at the feet of the most charming woman of all the world." And taking the disengaged hand of Mrs. McMurtry, he imprinted upon it a kiss that was sacramental in its solemnity.

That amazing woman suffered the demonstration in silence, then shutting her lorgnette, she tucked it in her belt with a dignified manner which indicated plainly that this episode with its surplus of emotion was definitively closed.

"And now," she said, as she rearranged the tray before her, "let us by all means attend to our tea. Two lumps today, Signor Marchese, or three?"



AT PARTING

By HUGH M. FERRISS

OH, be not true to me, poor faithful heart!

There are too many lands beyond the sea,
Too many other loves for me and thee.

And when we part,
Weep not, think not one thought of vain regret.
Ah, sweetheart, smile!

Remember me as one who loved a while,
Or else—or else—forget.

MONT AMOUR

By IMPERIA McINTYRE

UP the mount of Mont Amour knights and squires are riding.
Up the mount and up the mount and up the mount they press,
Handsome in their harnesses as men that go a-bridging,
Bold and brave like fighting folk of gallant gentillesse.
"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, fair Fortune throneth on thee;
Hear us cry our battle cry and yield ye while ye may.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, we charge loose rein upon thee;
Ours the battle morn and night and ours the battle day."

On the mount of Mont Amour there's a princess waiting.
Long she waits and long she waits and long she waits in vain.
All but her may meet and mate and make a merry mating;
All but her may love their loves, who love them back again.
"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, how lone thou art and lonely!
Barren as a barren bough when summer time is past.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, bring me a lover only;
Bring one lover, bring one love—ah, bring me bliss at last!"

Up the mount of Mont Amour there's a merchant climbing.
Gold and gold and always gold is the song he sings.
"Gold" and "sold" and "sold" and "gold" he ever rhymes, and, rhyming,
Hears the beating of his heart but as a coin that rings.
"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, pray help me to thy treasure.
There is naught men will not sell, and naught I cannot buy.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, my gold must get me pleasure;
None vend so much, none lend so much, none spend so much as I."

Up the mount of Mont Amour there's a soldier coming.
War and wine and war and wine are all the things he knows.
All his life is but a life of trumpeting and drumming;
All his world is but a world of buffetings and blows.
"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, I'll make thee to delight me;
Of the spoil that strength secures I take the lion's part.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, who wins that dares to fight me?
Who resists my iron hand and more than iron heart?"

Up the mount of Mont Amour there's a poet straining.
Little lilt of love he sang below he sings above.
Is his flame no fervent flame, but merely fickle feigning?
Can he lilt of love so loud and still have breath to love?

*"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, ah, hearken to my story;
Praise me for my poesy and laud me for my lays.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, come glory in my glory;
Lap me with the laurel leaf and bind me with the bays!"*

Up the mount of Mont Amour there's a lover speeding.
Worn and wayworn with the way most woefully is he.
Blood is on his brow and breast, for brow and breast are bleeding;
Love and life are in his eyes, for love and life they see.
*"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, the course is clear before me;
Merchant, soldier, poet, knight and squire have vowed in vain.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, my dearest dear throned o'er me,
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, makes me her prince of pain."*

Down the mount of Mont Amour knights and squires are creeping.
Down the mount and down the mount and down the mount they wend,
Wend with words of weariness and wend with wails and weeping,
Like the fleeing fugitives when luckless battles end.
*"Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, if sword and spear assail us
Well we know the guard to give 'gainst baron and 'gainst boor.
Mont Amour, ah, Mont Amour, do sword and spear avail us
When love holds love's fortalice, thou cruel Mont Amour?"*



PLAYTHINGS

By MAUD A. BLACK

BY a flower, a glance, a sigh,
Hardly won,
You vow to love me till you die—
Pouf! 'Tis done.

We were only playing then—
Why not so?
Who cares about a heart wound when
It does not show?

I look another way, and now
Smile and sigh—
Listen to another vow,
And so—pass by!

Hearts are brittle things, they say,
Rare and fine—
But why should I heed theirs, if they
Heed not mine?

B. O U N D

By SUSAN KEATING GLASPELL

IT was evident that they did not know her, and when she saw that they were talking earnestly and seemingly intelligently, she drew nearer that she might hear what it was they were saying of her picture.

"Not at all bad," the older man was saying. "In fact, if she were not such a swell, it is quite likely she would be really an artist."

She was standing behind them, half turned away, as though looking at another picture. Now she narrowed her eyes—seemingly for better perspective, in reality to keep back the quick, angry tears. She wanted to step forward and tell him how small and contemptible and cruel he and his kind—the whole artist world—were to her.

"I'm not at all sure that she isn't one, anyway," mused the younger man.

She came a step nearer, eyes still fixed on the other picture, and listened hungrily—though people would have smiled at the idea of Helen Lester Darrows hungering for anything.

"I don't care whether that child's hand was drawn by a fashionable woman or whether it was drawn by a beggar," he pursued. "It's great."

"Yes," the other admitted, "it's good drawing, all of it, and I like her violets and yellows. The woman's face is done very simply—she has the right idea there. As I say, if she hadn't the limitations of her position, she might be an artist."

"Fallows," exclaimed the younger man, "that's devilishly narrow, and rottenly unfair. Furthermore, it's antiquated, provincial, sour and childish. Art is bigger than either money or the

lack of it. Starvation is often an attendant, but it's surely not a requisite, is it? And a woman *may* transcend—even a Fifth Avenue house."

He said it hotly, and she could not restrain a glance toward him. There was gratitude in that quick glance at the back of the younger man's head.

"If she *did* actually transcend it," he defended himself, "yes. But I am quite conscious that the studio in which this was painted cost a great many thousand dollars to fit up."

"Rot!" jeered the younger man. "It's so easy to be 'conscious' of things that we know are so. Good work *can* be done—even in a steam-heated studio. I call it a pretty small point of view—damning a picture just because the artist was well fed. I say now, be fair—even to the rich. If you didn't know who painted this you'd call it a big thing."

"I think not, John," seriously, after consideration. "As I say, it's good. When you go to pick it to pieces, it's very good. But in the whole, it's not big. I'll tell you what's the matter with it. It's class."

"Well, what of it? Why should everybody paint beggars and barmaids? They don't make up the whole of life, do they?"

"I don't mean her subject," impatiently. "I mean the woman who did it. Don't you feel *her* class feeling?"

"No, I don't, Fallows"—jeeringly—"and I don't think you would, if you fellows weren't just a little sore at this thing of a patron of art butting in on *your* end of the game."

"You're absurd." He dismissed that idea sharply. "What this picture lacks, what this woman's work lacks, is the big grasp—universality. She's the victim of her traditions—an aristocrat first, then an artist. She doesn't understand her own people, because she can't stand off and look at them; she doesn't see it every way round. You can't understand anything that you don't see in its relationships. It's too bad; she just misses it. I see that you don't understand. You would if you knew more."

She was not sorry that at that moment Mrs. Van Brew came up to speak to her. For it was easier to talk about other things than to go on thinking about this.

She had not seen Mrs. Van Brew since her coming to Paris. They spoke first of New York, and of New Yorkers who were there.

"And you, my dear," she said then, "do you know how proud we are of you?"

Helen murmured something about being glad if her friends were pleased.

"It's so nice to have one of us really *do* something," she laughed. "It's so refreshing."

Helen frowned. She did not like the "one of us." It touched a sore spot just then.

"I was talking to General Carew a minute ago. He said it seemed good to see a woman one would like to take in to dinner hanging on the wall. Most of the pictures one sees now look as though the butcher's daughter had sat for them."

She laughed. She did not mind that. She had aimed at a woman like that, and was glad to have conveyed a sense of traditions. Surely she had a right to her choice of subject.

"And he said, my dear, that he could just *feel* your dear grandfather, his old friend Colonel Lester, in the background of that picture."

"Oh, but he couldn't!" sharply. "It's simply that he *knew*."

The older woman laid her hand upon Helen's arm. "My dear, you couldn't be anything but Colonel Lester's grand-

daughter if you tried—unless," whimsically, "it were Ann Douglass's daughter—or Paul Darrows's wife."

She raised a passionate glance to her own picture. "And I wanted to be an artist!" she murmured very low.

"And so you are, my child—why not? But blood is deeper than art—you can't get away from that. And do you *want* to?" looking at her curiously.

"I fear I am in the sad position of not knowing what I want," Helen laughed uncertainly.

"I'll tell you what you want. You want a little sail on the Mediterranean—in Dick's new yacht. We'll talk it over at the Hustons' tonight," and with an affectionate little tap of her fan she passed on.

Helen wanted to get away. She had thought she would be very happy that afternoon, for she had been proud that her picture should be hung at this, one of the smallest and most distinctive of the exhibitions. But now everything said to her seemed to irritate. "This is one of the most fashionable exhibitions in Paris, isn't it, Helen?" one of her friends asked. "Fashionable exhibition!" she scoffed to herself; no wonder the artists, real artists, made fun of them!

There were several art students there whom she knew. Two of them she was keeping in Paris. They came up, rather timidly, to speak to her. Their timidity, too, irritated her. It was not understanding of them—fine—big—to treat her as the Patron!

"How do you like my picture?" she asked one of them abruptly.

"Oh, it is so charming, Mrs. Darrows," she explained effusively, "so charming."

Again she was disappointed. She had hungered for the things one artist can give another. Why should she be shut out from all that? It was *small*, she told herself hotly, bitterly.

In the cloak room, as she was leaving, two girls were talking in the next stall. "What did you think of Mrs. Darrows's 'Mother and Child'?" one of them asked.

"I liked it," the other answered simply.

"Yes, it was good. But you know Mr. Sears couldn't get in here at all. It's a shame. He's awfully hard up. Oh, it's pull—pull—pull, just as bad here as it is in music."

"But perhaps Mr. Sears's picture really wasn't as good? Did you stop to think of that?"

"Huh! It would have been all the same if it had been. The president of this society is a howling swell; Mrs. Darrows is a howling swell. *Voilà!* And now they even tell me that this picture is to be bought by the State—oh, she has all kinds of French friends. And she doesn't need it, and Mr. Sears—"

She was sick of it, heartsick and hurt and furious! She hated them all! They didn't deserve to get on, most of them. Talk about the big spirit of art—the *camaraderie* of work! She hurried out into the open air. She was afraid she was going to cry.

She was giving her man the name of Sarah's little street over in the Quartier before she really knew that she was intending to go there. She should go to a tea which one of her friends was giving for some other friends who had just arrived. But she needed Sarah. This thing of starting there without knowing it proved that she needed her.

She and Sarah Powers had studied in the same studio in New York. And Sarah Powers had never seemed to have the slightest consciousness that she was the rich Mrs. Darrows. For that she loved her.

They were friends. And she was perhaps more proud of that friendship than of anything she possessed. It gave her courage and confidence. It even gave her self-respect.

Sarah told her what she thought good and what bad in her work just as simply and honestly as she would tell the girl in the next studio who might not have money to pay for her coal. The fact that Helen never had to worry about paying her rent did not enter into either Sarah's friendship or her criticism. That was why she

needed her today. Both Sarah's heart and Sarah's art were greater than either riches or poverty.

She was thinking of that as she drove through the Garden of the Tuileries. It was balm to her wounded soul.

And Sarah had liked this picture. She said it was a really big thing; she dwelt upon that now, needing it. Sarah had liked everything about the picture except the baby's neck, which she said was too thin. She said that even aristocrats had fat necks when they were babies. They had had an argument about that, and Helen had refused to change it, and there had ensued one of those invigorating, delightful quarrels—the great tonic of a friendship builded upon work.

In the quarrels, in all things, Sarah treated her as a fellow artist, not at all as the society woman who paints and perhaps does very creditable work. Her heart sent out a great flood of affection and gratitude at the thought of the rare simplicity and generous understanding of that.

For Helen Darrows was an artist—more than a good technician, more than a clever woman with taste and skill, deeper, less easily found, than that. She had the humility and the arrogance of the art impulse. Her work did not represent the longing of an idle woman for something to do, the impulse sometimes taking form in lion hunting, perhaps in theosophy, and most often in charities. It was simply that she, an artist, happened to be rich and socially important. She loved her work passionately, sacrificially, buoyantly, reverently; and yet that was not why she did it. She did it because she could not help it. She deserved neither praise nor blame for it.

It was her very simplicity and freedom from affectation which kept her in her natural environment, the thing which seemed most resented. It would have seemed to her affectation, a pose, to rent a studio over in the Quartier and shovel in her own coal. It was part of her modesty and simplicity to stay where she belonged.

And it had been a manifestation of her modesty and simplicity to turn to the near at hand. She had painted the people of her own kind because she knew them best. It seemed fairly axiomatic that one could do best what one understood best. She understood a woman like her own mother better than she understood the laundress. And yet this man had said that she did not really understand. Was that truth, or some more of this pseudo-truth born from the possible? Did he see those things in her work, or only think he saw them because they might have been there? One would like to distinguish insight from injustice. And just what did he mean by a "universalist"?

She brooded over it all as they made their way through the narrow streets of the Left Bank. And yet neither resentment nor perplexity quite smothered her sense of humor. She could see how people would smile over the pathos of her situation. "God pity the poor rich!" her brother Jack would say.

Yes, Sarah was at home. She heard her moving about in there after the ring. She heard something slam, and smiled—the big box into which Sarah threw things which she wanted to get out of the way in a hurry. It sounded to her like a peal of freedom.

Sarah came to the door with a towel in her hands, wiping them. And just then that towel looked like a banner triumphant.

"Oh, Helen, I *am* glad to see you! For pity's sake, come in here and tell me what's the matter with this woman's lap. It looks about as much like a lap as it does like a tub. Do you ever get stuck on things that you've done a thousand times?"

There was a tight place in her throat, so she did not speak. She could scarcely look at the lap for the tears blurring her vision—fortunately Sarah was too absorbed to notice them. This seemed so good!

Sarah said she could work a few minutes longer, filling in the chair. Would Helen mind sitting in the chair?

She would just as soon sit there as anywhere, wouldn't she? And it would be easier for her—Sarah. She wasn't to lean back; she was to sit forward.

And so meekly she sat forward, though she had come to "lean back."

She was happy—very happy, indeed, at thus peremptorily being told to sit down and fill the place of a franc-an-hour model. It restored her self-respect. It warmed her heart.

And when it was too dark to work longer on even the legs of a chair, they had tea. Sarah boiled the water on top of her very rusty little stove, and took the tea caddy from what in far-away days had been somebody's music cabinet. She spread a towel over Helen's dress to keep it clean, scolding her for having worn such a dress as that over there, when she knew she would have to come through that dirty courtyard.

But, on the whole, they were both very quiet. They drank the tea almost silently.

Sarah seemed tired. And the more she looked at her, the more she believed that she was not only tired, but worried.

It was curious about Sarah. She was slight—really frail, but when standing before a canvas, poised for work, she looked fairly heroic. Sarah aroused, absorbed, achieving, was a Sarah of masterful lines and buoyant strength. The joy of working made a goddess of her; the sense of mastery made her frail little body fairly rugged. The spark in her made for a superb bodily control, for the dignity and force and joy of unity. When it died down she seemed to become disunited, forceless, purposeless. Even the features of the uninspired Sarah seemed smaller and thinner, and the hair more drab.

She was not relaxing now. She kept looking at one of her canvases which she could see in the mirror. She looked dissatisfied, and that made her look inadequate.

"And how is your picture you were beginning the day I was over last?" Helen asked, wanting to lift that

fretted look. "You thought you were going to get something so good out of it."

"Which one?" Sarah laughed grimly. "I always think that when I'm beginning them."

"The little violin girl was posing for you. You were so interested in her face."

The gloom deepened. "I'm looking at it now. You aren't sitting where you can see it. No, don't move; I'd rather you wouldn't."

"Hasn't it been going well?"

"Oh, yes, well enough. Very well, until yesterday. Then she told me that if it looked like her she thought her uncle would buy it."

"How splendid!"

"Splendid?" bitterly. "How—devilish!"

"Why, Sarah," she laughed, "are you arriving at that interesting state where you don't *want* to sell your pictures?"

"I'm arriving at that state, interesting or anything else you want to call it"—hotly—"where it makes me mad and sick and sore to spoil a good thing in order to get money enough to pay the rent!"

"I don't understand," said Helen—and very honestly.

"No," bitterly, "you're rich."

It hurt so—disappointed so—this day of all others, that she was silent.

"Don't mind me, Helen"—and she thought Sarah was going to cry; "don't mind me. I'm all out of gear today. You know I didn't mean that."

"But what *do* you mean, Sarah?" she asked gently. "I wish you could tell me."

She put down her cup—though she had scarcely tasted her tea. "Helen, did you ever feel that there were two beings in you—oh, this sounds occult and melodramatic and all that, but I don't mean it that way—but did you ever feel that there were two beings in you, and that one of them interfered with the other?"

She could not but smile—a strange smile—at the timeliness and signifi-

cance of the question. "I doubt whether anyone has felt that much more strongly than I, Sarah," she answered quietly.

"Well, there are in me, I know. One of them is an artist—a more or less decent artist—who doesn't know anything about money nor care anything about it. The other thing in me is a Yankee—a good, shrewd, keen Yankee, with an eye to dollars and cents. And the Yankee just simply won't permit the artist to pass up the chances to make money. And if the artist could just once cut loose from the Yankee—"

"Why, Sarah—how absurd! I don't know anybody who has less sense about money than you have! What you need is *more* Yankee!"

"You don't know me. You don't see it. It's inside, almost unconscious—which is so much the worse. But I tell you, Helen Darrows, I never painted a picture yet that wouldn't have been better if there were no such thing as money in the world. Money—money! I hate it! It's the devil that stands in the corner and jeers at us artists—and runs us—and ruins us!"

She was dumfounded—for Sarah's face was tense with passion.

"Look at this picture! Yes, come around here where you can see it. I was going to have a great thing—a real thing—a thing I wanted to do. And what will I get? A picture of a sweet young girl that uncle will want to buy and hang in the library and say: 'This is a portrait of my niece, who plays the violin!'"

"But, dear—what did you want? And why can't you get what you want?"

"Cause the Yank won't let me!"

"Sarah," impulsively, "pack your suit case and come over home with me. You're tired."

She shook her head. "I know what you think. You think it's nerves. Well, it's not. It's truth."

"What did I want to do with it?" she went on, not taking her eyes from the picture. "When I first saw that girl I was wild to paint her. I wanted to take her and just work out one

thing I saw in her. I didn't *want* to do a portrait; I'm tired of being a copy cat! I wanted to say something—reveal something—unearth something. I was full of it—crazy about it—and I was getting it. And then yesterday she poured poison into my paint by saying her uncle would buy it if it looked like her. I held myself stern. I said uncle might go to the devil! And yet—see that 'sweet girlishness' in the eyes? I put that in today. Uncle will like 'sweet girlishness'—won't he? And uncle would never have stood for the slumbering possibilities I wanted to show in those eyes. And I actually *saw* it there—the things uncle would want—that's my excuse—and my damnation. Oh, yes, I know—I know better than anybody else—if I were greater—the artist really supreme—my vision would keep clear and I wouldn't *know* what uncle wanted to see! But, you see, I'm not all artist. Part of me is just a little, 'tight' New Englander, with an eye to the five hundred dollars uncle might be willing to dig up!"

And then Sarah was crying, and Helen was kneeling beside her, her arm about her.

"Sarah, dear"—oh, she did hope she would be able to say it right—it was so vital to her—"I want to talk to you about something, and I want you to listen to me, and I want you to try, for the sake of our friendship, not to be angry, and to understand."

After a moment Sarah looked up, her face streaked with the tears; the crying had been most unbecoming. She was a forlorn-looking little thing just then.

"Sarah, I, too, have been unhappy about money. I think perhaps I have been even more unhappy about it than you have."

Sarah stared.

"I have been unhappy because it—the things it represented—have stood between me and the things I have wanted to do. It has closed doors to me—yes, truly. It has put worm-wood into my happiest cups. When I came over here today I was very miserable. I came to you because I

needed you. And I needed you because you have always been big enough to make me feel free. Sarah, dear, then won't you have enough of the understanding heart to remove my own chains by making me feel I am taking away yours?"

A little comprehension had come into Sarah's face and hardened it.

"No—don't look like that! I'm asking you to be big—generous. Just put away the things in you too narrow to understand. We are both bound by money, I by the atmosphere it has created around me and against me—it does bind me, Sarah; it's going to cramp me and stifle me, because it's going to hurt my spirit—and you by your need of it. Aren't we big enough then to reach out and set ourselves free?"

Sarah had pushed back her chair. "I thought you understood me better than that, Helen," she said. "I am sorry I spoke of this."

"No—no! Now don't close yourself up in that mean, hard little way! That is the Yankee in you—the bigoted old Yankee saying smug things about self-respect and honest living and no man's bread. I see it—it's in your face. Sarah, let the artist in you have a chance. Let the artist in you tell you that art is bigger than either money or the lack of it—I heard that phrase today. Sarah, dear"—the tears were running down her cheeks now—"don't you love me enough to let me kill off that mean old Yank and give you a clear vision and a steady hand for the things that I know are in you? Can't you look down deep enough to see that, after all, I am only trying to free myself—free myself in putting it right with myself? Won't you help *me*, Sarah?"

Sarah's face had softened. She saw the genuineness of it, the bigness. It moved her.

She reached over and took her friend's hand. "Helen, I do understand, but—I can't. I'm sorry—I wish I were bigger—but I can't. Oh, yes, it's the Yank again—the same old Yank, perky and smug now, saying

that he can earn his own living. I know that it's not the biggest point of view, but truly, Helen, I've got to earn my own living—even though I sell my soul to do it! It's a species of stubbornness and narrowness which we dignify by the name of self-respect," she ended with a sobbing little laugh.

Helen was silent—hurt, disappointed, discouraged. And what surged up in her heart was this—the waste of it, the foolish, wicked waste of it!

Emotion carried her to larger vision, to many Helens and many Sarahs, and with larger meaning came the passionate, protesting thought—the waste of it, the foolish, wicked waste of it! A world in chains, refusing to set itself free—the gods must smile at the spectacle! Friendship, art, the things which were biggest, most bound. Life

seemed to have gotten itself into a strange twist.

Sarah was sitting there somberly, with her face in her two hands. What was Sarah thinking about? Did Sarah see? And did Sarah ever dream—dream dreams of a freed art, a bigger, saner humanity?

She wondered. She would like to have known. She would like to talk of some of those things. But she was afraid, afraid that, coming from her, it might seem absurd. Newborn thoughts were such tender things to find their way across a barrier, and perhaps into an unwarmed atmosphere.

And so she sat there wondering about it all. Perhaps these were the world's days of wondering. And beyond the wondering?



DOLLY—Handsome Mr. Rogers danced with me three times!
MOLLY—Well, it's a Charity Ball, you know.



JACK—Why did you give up your bachelor quarters?
TOM—Because I'm going to marry dollars.



MOST of us wouldn't be as good as we are if we realized how little the world cares what we do.

April, 1911—8

THE MODERN PROOFREADER

By STUART B. STONE

HYPHEN (-)—A short dash indicating quality and exclusiveness. *E. g.*, Mrs. Gobbsa-Golde.

DOLLAR MARK (\$)—A golden character placed at the beginning of numeral modifiers because all the world is after it.

PERIOD (.)—A small dot indicating finality. Disregarded by female punctuators.

SEMICOLON (;)—A mark used to set off the forty-three component parts of a Henry James sentence.

APOSTROPHE (')—A tiny character denoting possession. Obsolete with the ultimate consumer.

PER CENT MARK (%)—A Hebraic character indicating the amount of interest the pawnbroker can be expected to take in the tale of your woes.

ELIOFGHTL "7&"%—Linotype profanity induced by assaulting the wrong key.

DASHES (— — —)—A series of horizontal marks used as a spur to the reader's imagination when the author runs out of appropriate emotion. *E. g.*, "Heavens!" she gasped. "Why— What— Who would—"

EXCLAMATION POINT (!)—A screamer used at the close of Speaker Cannon's terse sentences.

PARALLEL COLUMNS—A device used to confound a peerless leader by comparing the sageness of later years with the indiscretions of his youth. Also used as a check on plagiarism.

QUOTATION MARKS (" ")—Apostrophe twins used to place the responsibility on someone else.



MEN often marry for figures—and so do women. But it's a different kind of figure.

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curling lashes; they were as beautiful as Miss Day's own.

Presently he, too, strolled out through the open window. The piazza was brilliantly lighted up and full of company. The Bellevue, being the smartest of all the little hotels in pretty Gedinne, was well furnished with guests. There were, however, not many English; they and the Americans generally prefer to go further than the Ardennes. Hence those English who did seek the charms of the Meuse were thrown together intimately. The devoted Helmer was fanning Mrs. Arkwright, who reclined in a basket chair. Wharton's eyes passed them over. At the far end of the piazza, where the lights were less glaring, Miss Day was standing by the balustrade watching the river.

Wharton threaded his way through the chattering crowd to her side. She moved an inch or so to make room for him.

"Come out on the river," he suggested.

"It's cold, don't you think?"

"Take a wrap."

"Well, improper, then."

"Why don't you come straight to the point? You know you do not care the ghost of a bad centime what those people in there think of you, or of us." Wharton spoke slowly and softly, with a kind of deliberate precision. "Come out, if you wish to, if you don't, stay in; but above all things, do, pray, let your actions be dictated by your inclinations!"

Lilian laughed. "Well, I'll come, then."

She stood by with her shoulders bare to the moonlight while he made ready the boat. There is not much town at Gedinne, only half a dozen hotels, and across the river the hills rise so steeply that there are no houses at all. Sweet, even, moon-silvered, lay the broad Meuse, brimming its green banks. Someone in the Bellevue was playing a tawdry waltz; but from far up the river one could hear the low music of the water tumbling over the weir at Noirefontaine. Toward that cool

sound, away from the lights and the laughter, Wharton rowed into the night. Great peaks of wooded hill rose into the pure sky; profoundly their shadows fell across the stream in blackest shade. Scattered lights in cottage windows cast down ladders of gold into the dark, trembling mirror. The summer night breathed forth its scent, and so did the great river itself, the scent of sweet water flowing through woodland.

"Mr. Wharton, how much do I owe you?" asked Lilian Day abruptly.

"I haven't troubled to reckon."

"I have. I make it nearly sixty pounds."

"I dare say it is about that."

"I'm afraid I shall have to ask your indulgence for a little while." She essayed to laugh. "I can't pay my debts yet."

"No?"

"You see, I would rather owe it to you than to Mrs. Arkwright."

"Really!"

Lilian was desperately nervous. Why did he not help her out? She had counted on his kindness. Wharton shipped his oars and leaned forward, his quiet eyes fixed upon her beauty. Lilian could always detect the quality of admiration when she met it. Hitherto they had been friends and no more; she resented the intrusion of this new element.

"I'm sorry," she said stiffly.

"But can you pay Mrs. Arkwright?" asked Wharton. "Can you even pay your hotel bill? You cannot? I thought as much. Then, Miss Day, may I ask what you mean to do?"

Lilian was speechless. She drew her hand out of the water and held it up dripping wet; her bracelets ran up her arm. She glanced at them and then at Wharton, a mute appeal.

"You won't get much for them, you know," said Wharton mercilessly. "You had more valuable things when you first came, which I haven't seen you wearing lately. I don't know what you have done with them—sold them, have you? What do you intend to do, I wonder? How do you

propose to get away from the Bellevue?"

"I've always had such luck before!" she sighed.

"It was indiscreet to trust to it. It is sufficiently disagreeable to owe money to such a woman as Mrs. Arkwright; it's worse to owe it to a man."

"Not to you."

"Are you so sure of that?"

"I don't know what you mean!"

"I mean that I intend to press for payment."

"Oh!" said Lilian incredulously.

"Well, I can't pay you," she went on, throwing back her head. "I haven't sixty pounds in the world, nor the means to raise it."

"You can quit my debt in full at once, if you choose."

"How?"

"By becoming my wife."

He took up the oars as he spoke and rowed rapidly upstream. Lilian divined that he wished to give her time to think, but she could not bring herself to take his proposal seriously. It seemed out of character with all she knew of him.

"I don't understand you," she said at last.

"Don't you? Do you remember a conversation we had about three weeks ago? We were discussing marriage; and you told me pretty plainly that you would never marry a poor man. Well, I've never professed to be other than a poor man—poetry doesn't pay—consequently, I held my tongue, since I saw no chance of winning you. But now—well, I press my advantage."

"But I don't want to marry you!"

"Naturally. I have no money."

"But I shouldn't want to marry you if you had!"

"Am I personally distasteful to you?"

"You—I don't love you, Mr. Wharton."

"You don't love Helmer—yet you would have been ready to accept him, if he had not transferred his attentions to Mrs. Arkwright."

"Oh!" cried Miss Day, crimson with wrath. "How dare you say such

things to me? Take me back at once; I won't listen to you any more."

"You *will* listen to me," said Wharton quietly, "at least, until you have heard all I have to say. You've given me to understand more than once that you would marry anyone who offered you a couple of thousand a year. I don't say you put it so crudely as that, but that's what it came to. To gratify your taste for luxury, you were ready to sell yourself to the highest bidder. Well, you have now incurred obligations which you can't discharge. I do not see how you can refuse to make this sacrifice to pay your debts, when you were ready to make the same sacrifice to please yourself. I personally am less distasteful to you than Helmer—"

"You are intensely distasteful to me," exclaimed Miss Day. "Mr. Helmer is incapable of speaking as you are speaking now."

"Possibly. He is also incapable of feeling as I am feeling now."

"I don't care how you feel. Take me back directly!"

"You decline my proposal?"

"I most emphatically do!"

"You prefer to remain in my debt?"

A glance of supreme disdain was the only answer he received. Wharton, who had expected no more, bent to the oars with a slight smile. He rowed well; he had been in his college boat at Cambridge, he had told her once. Even in the midst of her wrath, she could not help admiring his easy, graceful swing. What did she know about him? He was a writer and wrote poetry, and made little by his writings; he had also a certain private income. Obviously it was insufficient to keep him in bachelor comfort; how, then, could it support two? Lilian had a horror of poverty. She could not have been happy in a cottage even with love, and at this moment she was not far from hating Wharton. Yet he had her in chains. A debt of honor is supposed to weigh lightly on a woman; but Lilian did not see how she was to continue to exist under this obligation. It was insufferable! An

exasperated laugh rose to her lips. Truly he had her in a corner.

Suddenly a new idea flashed into her mind. She leaned forward. "What do you say to tossing for it?" she asked.

"What, best of three tries?"

"Yes, with dice. They're fairer than a penny is."

His eyes met hers. There was a kindred spark in both. "You're certainly a born gambler," he said with a low laugh. "But we've no dice here; how do you propose to decide it?"

"At the Casino. We can get a private room. If I win, I'm quit of all my debt; if I lose—"

"If you lose—"

"If I lose," repeated Lilian, tilting back her defiant little chin, "I'll pay my debt in the way you suggest—and I hope you'll like your bargain! Row quickly, please, and let us get it over."

There is at Gedinne a little Casino, where a band plays mild music and a fountain spins its silver thread in the most diminutive of gardens. It is not thronged; you may see a couple of tepidly interested tourists staking their francs upon the *Petits Coureurs* and half a dozen others looking on. Through all these Wharton led Miss Day, into the small room beyond, which is reserved for private parties. Lilian sat down on a red velvet couch and looked round her. There was a little table covered with a white cloth, which was repeated to infinity in the mirrors on the walls. There was a gilt clock and a gorgeous chandelier, which gave a gorgeous light. Wharton had left her alone for a moment, to fetch the dice and order some pretense of refreshment. She covered her eyes with her hands and for the first time began to think seriously of her position.

It was a graver, steadier woman who faced him when he returned. He, too, was very white; his eyes had been open from the first. He took his seat opposite her, laying the dice on the table.

"You are quite sure that you are willing to put it to this test, Miss Day?"

"Are you sure that you're willing to ask me to put it to this test?"

"Yes," said Wharton, low but steadily.

"I can't believe it of you."

"I can scarcely believe it of myself."

"You—you are going to drive me into marrying you against my will?"

Wharton did not speak.

"You won't ever be able to respect yourself again," said Lilian, her honest indignation showing through her words.

"I do not respect myself now—but I've counted the cost." He raised his head and continued, coldly and firmly: "I have counted the cost and I find it worth while. It's useless to appeal to my better nature, because at this moment I have only one feeling worth consulting. I leave you to imagine what that is."

"Self-will," said Lilian.

"No, not that."

"There's no need to wait any longer," said Lilian, and took up the dice.

Her first throw was a two and a three. Wharton bettered this with fours; the first round fell to him.

The second time she threw nine—a five and a four. Wharton followed with deuce ace, and now they were equal.

It seemed to Lilian that she hesitated for a long time before she made her last venture. It was not so in reality. She shut her eyes to make the cast and dared not open them for a moment. When she did raise her lids she met Wharton's eyes, and he was smiling. "Eleven," he said. "I shall scarcely better that. I think you've won, Miss Day."

"Well, you must try," she said, pushing the box over to him. He took it with a shrug and cast out the dice without a moment's hesitation. Lilian bent forward to look, and then sat back in her chair with an intense cold shock. He had thrown sixes.

"Well?" said Wharton after a pause.

"You've won, of course."

"You will marry me?"

"I'm at your disposal."

"You don't want to, however?"

"That wasn't in the bond, was it?"

He leaned across and took her hands. She yielded, passive when he put his arm round her, when he bent down to her beautiful face. She expected to be kissed, but he did not touch her. She felt the intentness of his gaze.

"You know I love you?" he said in a shaken voice.

If she had not known it before, she did then. Though he was so gentle, it was with the gentleness of passion held in restraint. He did love her; he loved her deeply; she had never before met passion like this. But her will held firm against it.

"I don't love you," she answered.

"But you shall."

"No, I never will."

"You won't let yourself. Why? Because I am poor?"

"No because you—you force me; you take me for your slave." She lay passive in his arms at his mercy, but her defiance glowed and burned. "I believe I could have loved you; I've been near it. But I won't do it now. You may have me; you can kiss me if you want to, and I'll marry you on any day you choose to name; but I shall never respect you. I shall always think of you as the man who bought me. You can have everything you did buy, but not an atom more. Never, never, never, till I die!"

He was as white as ashes. "You'll observe I have not even kissed you yet," he said.

"Well, why don't you, then? You've got every opportunity!"

A gust of feeling swept over his face. Lilian shut her eyes, with a shiver of distaste. As she did so she felt him stiffen; next moment he unclasped his arms and pushed her away. "The bargain's off," he said.

"Why? What do you mean?"

"I can't do it, and I won't. I am not wholly a brute, Miss Day."

Lilian put up her hand to her head. Chief among her feelings was an immoderate resolve not to break down; she hated the women who weep at critical moments.

"In that case," she said as calmly as

she could, "I still owe you sixty pounds."

"No. You owe me nothing. You offered to pay, and I refused. Quit-tance in full, if you please."

"But—"

"I will not take a penny from you," said Wharton almost savagely. "On the contrary it is you who will borrow from me to get away from Gedinne. I will not have you remain in debt to such a woman as Mrs. Arkwright."

"But you can't afford it!"

He laughed. "Can't I? Because I don't choose to wear diamond studs, it doesn't follow that I can't afford them. My mother is Lady Amabel Wharton, Miss Day. I could buy up your friend Helmer several times over. I did not tell you this because I did not choose to be married for my money. I'd rather have taken you against your will than from that motive with your will. But as I can't do what I intended, why, I won't have you at all."

Lilian covered her face with her hands. Wharton paid the waiter and dismissed him; he bowed to Lilian very politely and turned toward the door. Her eyes followed his movements. He was just going out when she ran to him and caught his arm.

"Why did you tell me that about your mother?" she demanded with blazing eyes.

"Why should I not?"

"Because—because—oh, you'll never believe me now, but I don't care—I will say it—because I'd meant to tell you that I'll marry you as soon as you like."

"What is that you say?"

"You can take me or leave me," she retorted defiantly, though she was half crying. "I'd have hated you if you'd taken me against my will—oh, but I *would*! But I loved you when you let me go. There—that's the truth."

"And what will you do if I take you with your will?"

Arch with half-suppressed triumph, his eyes were searching hers. Lilian laughed, too; she put up her hands and clasped them behind his neck.

"Ah! For that I'll trample you under my feet all the days of your life!"

A P R I L

By JEAN WILDE CLARK

THERE'S the sheen of green a-shimmer
On the willow boughs, a-quiver,
As they bend a blithe new morning
To the half-awakened stream.
And the water, stirring faster,
Snatches at the sun's light laughter,
'Till they two go seeking after
The pale ice queen still a-dream.

And, afright at their caresses,
Swift she binds her scattered tresses,
Scurrying across the meadow
To be lost upon the lea.
And the sun and water vying,
Racing, chasing, testing, tying,
Charge and challenge, hiding, hieing,
To the footstool of the sea.

And a blue born violet lying
Cradled 'neath the leaves sear sighing,
Calls the racers to a robin
And he darts ahead to see.
Learns he from the mosses sunning
Of the two in rapid running;
Sights the winner—April sun!
And lauds the victory.



EVEN the fool is important three times in his life—when he is born, when he marries and when he dies.



NOTHING makes a man rise quicker in the world than sitting on the spur of necessity.



IT sometimes takes a man down when a woman sizes him up.

HER GUIDING STAR

By MARY ANTHONY

IT was all over. Washington's most popular statesman had succumbed to a short and severe attack of double pneumonia in the big, conspicuous house of whose bigness and conspicuousness he had been so proud. Now the melancholy excitement of death whispered and tiptoed through the darkened rooms; a somber wagon stood outside; crape hung from the front door, and in the streets the newsboys were already screaming: "Extry! Extry! Last moments and dying words of Robert Fuller!"

The attending physician sat in the room that had been the dead statesman's sanctum. He had been one of Fuller's many warm friends, and now that his professional skill was no longer needed, he gave himself up to the sense of his own great personal loss.

Suddenly he turned, conscious of another presence in the room; the trained nurse had entered noiselessly in her heelless shoes. She was a handsome woman of forty-five, cool and immaculate in white piqué, a stiff gauze cap on her smooth, heavy hair. A schoolmate and chum of Mrs. Fuller's, she had always completely eclipsed and overshadowed her plainer friend; her tyrannical beauty had permitted Mary Allen only beaux that she either did not want or was tired of. Strangely enough, by a sort of belated justice, the only man she had ever cared for had asked her to release him from their engagement in order to marry gentle Mary Allen.

Through the twenty succeeding years she had never ceased to love Robert Fuller nor to hate his wife. She had followed his career jealously, exulting passionately in his success.

"Well, Miss Maclane," asked the physician, "how is she?"

"Very reasonable or else stunned. I gave her the powder, Doctor, and she thanked me in her ordinary manner."

"Where is she now—lying down?"

"No. She has Ethel and Billy in her room, reading the Bible to them." There was an undercurrent in her voice that was distinctly unpleasant.

"Of course," she added hastily, "it's very sensible of her to take it that way, very beautiful if she can—but I cannot understand her calmness in the face of such a loss!"

The physician did not answer. Suddenly she broke out:

"What a pity it is that such men as he should marry so young! The wife of his youth, who can cook and economize and take in washing, is so hopelessly unfitted for public life. He needed a woman of tact and brains, who could have helped him in his career—an inspiration, not a housekeeper."

"Miss Maclane," said the doctor, "I leave Mrs. Fuller in your care; if she wants anything let me know."

Miss Maclane noiselessly left the room. The door of Mrs. Fuller's sitting room was ajar and she quietly pushed it open. The widow was rocking back and forth, her sobbing daughter of fifteen clasped like a child in her arms. The boy, a manly little fellow of thirteen, was pretending to look out of the window.

"But we have his memory," the mother was saying gently. "We have his example to live up to, his patriotism, his high sense of honor. Your father could have been a rich man had he chosen; he preferred to enrich his

country. In all our married life he was never too busy to play with you children. When you were little things, too young to remember, we had some pretty hard times; your father never lost courage. There wasn't much we could do to help, but you children were always good-natured, and I used to cook delicious suppers for him when he came home, tired and hungry. He used to say that it was no temptation to drink and forget his troubles when he could eat and forget them, and that he won more than one campaign on my cooking. Ah, Miriam, come in, dear!"

The trained nurse entered with flushed cheeks. Something in her personality affected the children oddly. Ethel slipped off her mother's lap with sudden dignity, and she and her little brother left the room as if they had been told to go.

"The doctor wants you to lie down, Mary," said Miss Maclane.

As she made her old friend comfortable on the couch and covered her with a steamer rug, her big gray eyes absorbed every detail of the room. It had been made as a background for a woman with taste, for Persian rugs and rich ornament and silks reflected in long mirrors. Miss Maclane's lips curled over the comfortable, unpretentious furniture, the bookcase containing such classics as Milton and "Pilgrim's Progress," endless photographs of her children, and on a stand actually a great basket of mending! And this was Robert Fuller's wife—the woman who could have been a great social power—this dowdy little woman with no figure left after the bearing and rearing of four children, her gray hair smoothed back from her face after the fashion of her own mother, who had worn a cap at thirty!

And "beautiful Miriam Maclane," the nurse, wasting her brilliant education, her undoubted social talent and her intelligence on a hard and ungenial life!

As she turned to leave the room, Mary caught her hand and drew her down beside her.

"You don't know what a comfort it's

been to have you here, dear, instead of a stranger. You've chosen a noble profession, Miriam, and you've been very brave about it. But I sometimes wonder why you never took one of your good offers and got married; I think every nice girl ought to have a husband and children of her own. I can tell to you what I would never breathe to another living soul—that I've worried about things sometimes. I've felt as if Robert ought to have had someone cleverer than I, someone who could have been more of an intellectual companion to him, someone who could have helped him with his work. I never could; but I have been able to economize for him, and we don't owe a penny in the world. We had only his salary, you know, and with four children to bring up and their doctor and dentist and school bills to pay, you can imagine there wasn't much left! But I've given the country four good citizens, morally, mentally and physically sound to the core, and that's something, isn't it?"

"It's everything," said Miss Maclane.

What mental effect, she wondered, could her own constant brooding on this subject have had on Mary? Her hatred softened a little under this incompetent wife's helpless confession of weakness. So poor Mary had sufficient mentality to be conscious of her failure and sufficient generosity to admit it? It was unusual for Mary to talk so freely of herself, or to turn to anyone for comfort; she had been so used to bearing other people's burdens on her shoulders, so used that husband and children never realized how heavily they leaned.

Later, when Mrs. Fuller seemed to doze, Miriam went back to the sanctum and closed the door behind her with a sob of deliverance. Here at last she could be alone for a little while, to think about Robert and to weep for him if she wished. Alone in the most intimate room of the man she had loved, she seemed to get almost a physical sense of his presence; it was there that she went to be alone with him. She never thought of sitting by the bed that

held his lifeless clay; it was not the poor perishable body she had loved, she told herself; it was his mind and heart and soul. Perhaps the pain in her heart was not as exclusively mourning for the dead as she imagined. There was a keener pang for the life that her great disappointment had soured; her life might have been so rich, so interesting—Mary had made it cold and barren. Her nature might have mellowed and grown so kind, so happy—it was Mary who had made it hard and bitter. The very preservation of her beauty seemed due to a sort of glaze over her features, a mask that as yet defied the ravages of time.

It was a plain little room. The walls were lined with bookcases, the contents evidently in constant use, full of slips of paper, and defaced by under-scorings, dogears and marginal notes. His big Morris chair was pulled close to the lamp, and on a convenient stand stood a jar of tobacco and a half-filled pipe. She recognized the desk as a family heirloom; it had been his father's before him. She remembered the day when Robert and she had spent a whole afternoon as children finding the mysterious, secret drawer. Excitedly she dropped on her knees beside the great mahogany table, made as only the past generation could make desks, rich in cubbyholes and cupboards and drawers. Rapidly her firm, white fingers slid over the dark surface, till a faint color rose in her pale cheeks, and with a click the hidden spring yielded and let slip the secret drawer.

There was a box inside, a black box with mother of pearl figures, and a faint romantic odor of sandalwood. It had no lock, and Miriam opened it. Three numbered and unaddressed envelopes and a tissue paper bundle. Miss MacLane unrolled them and broke into harsh laughter.

"Robert Fuller, the immaculate—the irreproachable! Even he! Even he!"

A pair of absurd little slippers, covered with lace and stained with age! Surely no sensible woman had ever danced in such monstrosities! She

held one of them up gingerly by its ridiculous French heel. Some dancer or musical comedy star, or worse still—bah! The trained nurse had no faith in the intrinsic virtue of man. With no suspicion of the look that distorted her features, Miriam took from the first envelope a slightly yellowed sheet of notepaper, scribbled over in Robert's dashing hand.

MONDAY.

SWEETHEART:

Surely you aren't going to break my heart just because I called your slippers silly. They *are* silly, adorably, angelically silly—like my sweetheart when she talks nonsense. I objected to them, not because they weren't pretty—you have the prettiest little feet I ever saw—but because they are so impractical. And if you turned your ankle in them, you mightn't be able to dance again for a long time, and that would be a pity, Terpsichore!

("I knew she was a dancer!" exclaimed Miriam.)

You *will* talk that nonsense about my being bound to someone else, which makes me wretched! And, since we only *thought* we loved each other, why do you? It was a silly boy and girl affair.

Don't torture me, and you shall have all the foolish shoes you wish—glass ones like Cinderella, if you want them. Now, darling, send me one line in reply, if it's only to say, "I forgive you, Robert."

TUESDAY.

MY LOVE:

My dear, quaint, tender-hearted little love! To send me your slippers, your dear little foolish slippers, as a sign that you won't be foolish any more! But I want you to be foolish! I love you just as you are—I wouldn't have another curl added to your head or another inch to your small stature. You are and always will be the most beautiful woman in the world to me—I wonder if you realize half how fascinating you are? Why, you are the kind of woman a man would want to conquer the world for, in order to lay it at your feet. Why do you brood over another woman when you know I love you? You are my inspiration, my love, my guiding star! A million kisses from your adoring

ROBERT.

Miriam drew a long tortured breath. The heart in her breast seemed to have turned to stone. So, after all, he had found his soulmate, his inspiration! To this strange woman the possible purity of this love was less unbearable than their guilt. She laughed almost hysterically over his light disposal of the woman to whom he was "bound." But

how came the letters back into his possession? Had they quarreled? Was she dead? What had he called her? His guiding star? Miss Maclane hoped that the "quaint, tender-hearted little love" was dead, and that corruption was busy with the face that had been for Robert Fuller the most beautiful in the world.

With shaking hands she tore open the other envelope. It was dated the day before he was taken ill.

I have just found in an old drawer these absurd slippers and my two old love letters. I thought that to an elderly politician, with a growing family to absorb what tranquil power of affection he has left, they would seem ridiculous. They do—ridiculously inadequate! Tonight I have a strange premonition that my life work is nearing completion; death has no terror for me; my only worry is for my children. I pray that their mother may be left to them. These foolish slippers! Heaven pity the man who never made of himself just such a bombastic fool! And she is still the most beautiful woman in the world. She is the same delicate woman whose stern sense of honor would have bound me for life to a woman I once thought I loved.

Everything in my life that has been worth while I owe to her. Her clear, fine mind has guided me when I would have faltered; her sympathy has been balm to my failures, her smile reward for my success. When a man has found such a woman he has been given the best life has to offer—there can be nothing more—

For more than half an hour Miss Maclane sat without moving, the papers on her lap, careless of discovery. Without doubt she suffered acutely, and she was a woman who showed to advantage only under happy circumstances. Robert, instead of fading into a romantic memory, had kept his place in her life through the glory of his career. An exceedingly vain woman, she had never ceased to hope that he loved her, nor to wonder with mingled hate and amusement over the plain little "homebody" who had taken her place.

Until her father's failure and death ten years previous she had traveled with him all over the world. Twelve years before she had had three triumphant seasons in Washington. Robert had paid her some attention, and had seemed impressed, even a little dazzled, by her accomplishments, her beauty and her wit. And now she, who had set out

so gaily to conquer the world, was ending the fight as a nurse, at twenty-five dollars a week, thirty for contagious cases, the place in this great cruel universe that she could have filled so brilliantly in the incompetent hands of a dowdy little person, who had not even gumption enough to suspect the existence of her rival, whose "clear, fine mind" had been her husband's guiding star!

Miriam rose stiffly to her feet. Her brain was numb; her cramped limbs had gone to sleep. She was mastered by a dull, relentless impulse to see some other human being suffer as she was suffering, to wound, to crush. She found Mrs. Fuller at her desk amid the disorder of old letters and photographs.

"Oh, Miriam, come here, dear! Look at this picture of Robert when he was a little boy. His mother gave it to me when I was a bride. Isn't Billy his very image? You know, Robert had a strange presentiment that he was going to die; he left his affairs in such perfect order. His love and devotion—"

Her voice failed her, and she covered her face with her hands. Her mouth scarcely quivered, but great tears splashed down on the quaint little yellow picture. When Miss Maclane spoke her voice was a little cold but quite natural.

"Mary, I found something—I'll explain how later—that might interest you."

She laid the black box with its mother of pearl figures in her old friend's lap and went away. A startled sob and an exclamation pursued her. Suddenly her knees seemed to give way under her, and she sank into an armchair. She had struck a woman who had never been anything but kind to her, and betrayed her love, who was dead and no longer able to guard his secret. The storm of her disappointment and injured love was spent now.

Miriam rose and listened eagerly for some sound from the other room. Its stillness frightened her. Perhaps she had fainted! Alarmed, the nurse went in without knocking.

The widow was still sitting before her

desk, the black box opened on her lap. Her little motherly face was white and tear-stained, but in her eyes lay the quiet of still waters, in whose safe bosom the pearls of experience lie hidden. It was the look of one to whom life is no longer anything but a pilgrimage and death the veil.

She smiled at Miriam, and held the slippers up for her to see.

"Look," she said gently. "Aren't they silly? Robert and I had our first quarrel about them. And I was worried about you, too. I wouldn't marry him till I was *quite* sure you did not care for him deeply, Miriam. And there are some letters of his.

"Some day, not now perhaps, but some day, I shall let you read them if you care to."



THE FOG MAIDEN

By ETHEL DUFFY TURNER

IN from the sea, born of mystery,
 Swift as a gull she flies;
 And oh, the snare of her wind-tossed hair,
 And the lure of her gray-green eyes!
 On the edge of the tide her footsteps glide,
 O'er the shifting golden sand,
 Till her white robes drift through a canyon's rift,
 And wraithlike she steals on the land.

Where the stark reeds trim the marsh's rim,
 And the crimson dawn clouds gleam
 In the inlet bay where the wild ducks stray,
 She leans in a silver dream;
 As the broad sky glows in amber and rose,
 And a lone gray crane flaps by,
 Once more to the sea her white feet flee
 On the frosted trail of her sigh.

Then the waves that danced where the sunlight glanced
 Grow gray as the mask of death;
 And the pelican flees to the open seas
 From the spectral swoop of her breath.
 There's a witch light lies in her wintry eyes
 While she shrouds the rocks with her hair;
 And the drowning cries from a wreck arise
 As she fades with a laugh on the air!



SOCIETY never appears so corrupt as when we have just been snubbed by it

SOME DEFINITIONS

By D. B. VAN BUREN

GENEALOGY—The art whereby the coachman is put inside the coach by his wealthy grandson—provided the old man has been dead long enough.

DOT—The sum set aside by the bride to pay the expenses of the divorce.

PROPERTY: *Real*—Anything sufficiently stable to support a mortgage.

Personal—Anything you can successfully conceal from your wife.

Unreal—Your umbrella, the instant it is out of your sight.

BILL—An unwelcome statement of a disagreeable fact.

HANGINGS—Textile articles strung around a room for the purpose of retaining the odor of tobacco and thus providing a gentle stimulus to breakfast table conversation.

VANITY—A purely personal opinion that is pathetic because it is so lonesome.

VIRTUE—A costly foible that we spend more time praising than practising.

MODESTY—Keeping your right hand behind your back while your left hand drops a button into the plate.

FORETHOUGHT—Making over your property to your wife a sufficient time before the crash to prevent the court from setting aside the transfer.

SEALSKIN—See *Cat*.

WISDOM—The ability to wear a pair of spectacles impressively and to get people to tell each other how much you know.



"AFTER all, things are pretty evenly apportioned in this world."
"Eh-yah! A strong-minded woman generally has a weak-minded husband."



LOVE is blind, but it has a wonderful knack of picking out all the rich girls.

SLAPDASHER THE ARTIST

By FELIX RIESENBERG

EVERYONE will agree that I was to be pitied in the lean days before the sleepy orbit of my existence was suddenly changed and I became a shining satellite in the train of that supreme genius Slapdasher. But what could I expect, trying as I was to fit the methods of a bygone age to the rapid exigencies of modern life?

I am, or I should perhaps say I was, an artist before I became associated with my genial benefactor Martin Slapdasher. My low collar, my soft black hat, my baggy trousers, not to mention the long streamer of crape that served me as a necktie, all proclaimed me the regulation dauber of paint. Things certainly were different in those sleepy days before the great Slapdasher had burst upon the astonished world in showers of brilliant paint. At the time I mention not a sou was left me to rub against another, and I was indeed in a bad way. At the exhibit of the American artists, my canvas entitled "Impresario" had remained unsold, and believe me or not, I had worked a full year upon this large painting. However, this as well as the inferior work of others seemed to attract no intelligent attention from the large crush of fashionable women who found time to attend the opening reception of the exhibit. The men, if they looked at any of the pictures at all, seemed only to do so when the expanse of gold frame was so great as literally to challenge their imagination if not their admiration for the acres of stretched canvas coated with gaudy pigments by solitary workers such as I. The only time that the paintings were really admired was on the free days, but of course none of them was ever sold.

It was shortly after this exhibit that I

met my former schoolmate Martin Slapdasher. Our paths had long since diverged, and while I had at times read of some brilliant operation of his in the larger field of business, he, other than remembering that I had gone to Paris to study art, had lost all track of me. Slapdasher however greeted me warmly, and grasping me by the arm led the way to a nearby place of refreshment. He then insisted, when something comforting had been placed before us, that I tell him the story of my life since the day we parted at the door of the little red schoolhouse.

When my tale had been told, Slapdasher, big and successful, spoke sagely to me, shabby and discouraged. "Seneca," said he, "your story interests me greatly, both on account of the view it has given me of the present wayback methods of the average unsuccessful artist, but because it also proves to me that the great multiplication of modern conveniences has added so many more functions to the ordinary course of the so-called civilized life that the man of means has no longer the necessary time nor inclination to appreciate or enjoy a work of art. His gallery was stocked years ago by his grandfather, or if he is of the self-made type and desires a number of paintings, his art broker supplies them from the large expensive stock already on hand. Furthermore, with the advance in fire-proof construction of buildings where paintings are liable to be stored, we see that the chance of a conflagration helpful to artists is exceedingly rare.

"Of course, my dear Seneca," he went on, seeing how shocked I was, "you will declare that art can never die, which is true enough. There is nothing the matter with art itself; the fault lies with the

antiquated and expensive way in which it attempts to perpetuate itself. Those whose social and business engagements still leave them sufficient time to cultivate a taste for art are as you know far too poor to purchase a painting that takes a year to make."

I saw nothing cheering in the prospect held forth to me by Slapdasher, though he continued smiling as though the whole thing was a huge joke. Suddenly a dark thought assailed me. He was jesting with me in my distress! My blood boiled; I became purple with indignation and would have spoken, had not Slapdasher at that moment motioned to the waiter to fill our glasses again. However I misjudged the good fellow, and for that momentary doubt I have since breathed many a prayer of forgiveness.

"What would you advise me to do?" I finally asked, for his disgusting cheerfulness seemed unbounded, and I saw no harm in being agreeable to a man who insisted upon paying for the drinks.

"Merely this," he began, blowing a wreath of smoke very deliberately and pronouncing his words with an air of calm conviction, "coöperate. Coöperation is the salvation of the present age. Formerly people were compelled to feed and clothe those who worked for them, which was bad enough, and later on they were compelled to pay them, which was worse; but now they merely coöperate with them and have their work done for nothing.

"What you should do, my dear Seneca, is to apply this ultra-modern conception of the coöperative idea to the hopelessly antiquated business of the artist. In other words, you should coöperate with a dozen or so of your fellow artists, and by conducting your affairs in a scientific manner lift yourself out of this awful slough of despair and take your rightful place in the world."

How the noble Slapdasher then took hold of me, and how he organized the great enterprise that has since made me rich and has lifted the name of Martin Slapdasher high among the modern masters would take too long to describe in detail; all I can venture is the briefest sketch. That he was undoubtedly right

in his diagnosis of the condition of modern art events fully proved, though I doubt not that had I partaken of less liquid refreshment I would have rejected his scheme with fine scorn and be as poor today as I was on that memorable evening when, hanging on Slapdasher's arm, I walked forth unsteadily beneath the gay lights of the café.

The next day we organized the Quartier Latin Society of Coöperative Artists—a society that was destined to revolutionize the art products output of the world, and soon had hung its paintings in the front parlor of every farmhouse in the land.

First we got little Jimmy Le Febvre, whose sky and cloud effects—he had once been up in a balloon in Paris—were the admiration of all beholders, though his figures and landscapes were as stiff as the toy soldiers and farms that we see in the shops at Christmas time. Then came Doujon, who, while good at foreground and color work, was a stick at doing anything more than ten feet away from his canvas. These two misfires, who after years of artistic loading had failed ever to go off, were saved from starvation by the genius of Slapdasher, and formed the nucleus of our coöperative society. Slapdasher secured a large factory building with a good northern exposure, and here we soon had installed a populous society of painters, all specialists in some particular form of the art. Tommy Jones, of Sedalia, Missouri, who had studied with me at the Beaux Arts, worked from eight to six steadily, with an hour off for lunch, painting in backgrounds. Dick Geldar spent his days splashing in his peculiar martial effects of soldiers and savages in action, working regularly on all our war pictures. Georg Blomb took the canvases from Geldar's hands and put on his inimitable Verestchagin atmosphere, for which he once almost had a picture hung in the Salon, had it not been so hopelessly out of drawing. The paintings then went to Jimmy Le Febvre for the sky, and finally Doujon would touch up the foreground, which adds so much to the interest of a work of art.

In this manner we developed combina-

tions of artists, all good beyond dispute in their various ways, and the final result was a series of such masterpieces as had never been given to the world before. In my enthusiasm at this remarkable success, I was for charging a good round sum for the paintings, but here Slapdasher proved his wisdom again by opposing me.

"Business today," he said, "is built up on a system of small profits and large sales, and this art factory of ours is an up-to-the-minute, sweat-'em-out manufacturing concern." Which of course was so, and I wisely yielded to him in the matter.

Being a truly coöperative society, we got along with the greatest harmony, and our membership was constantly augmented by the joining of men in all the varied branches of the business. Daily I sat at my desk in my private office dictating to my stenographers. The foreman of each gang—or I should say group, though Slapdasher always used the former term in referring to our combinations of artists—would come to my office at eight o'clock to get his orders for the day. Usually they would read something like this:

LANDSCAPE GROUP No. 4, Van Twiller, foreman.
SPECIFICATIONS

Oil painting No. 37,453. Order No. 538,249.
Title—Scene on the Classic Harlem.

JONES—Put in light gray background.

VAN TWILLER—Do river, view No. 42 plus cut
No. 6 of Bon Ton Rowing Club on north
bank.

ROBINSON—Draw in High Bridge, view from
south.

BROWN—Paint ditto, and work in foliage on
shore.

LE FEBVRE—Dull, cloudy sky, nimbus effect
No. 35.

SHIPPING NOTE—Place in double sweep gilt
frame, Type 7, and ship at once.

Each foreman would get a sheaf of these orders in the morning, and by night the paintings would be neatly stacked to dry, each a perfect masterpiece in its way.

During the first months of our business we were seriously troubled by the large accumulation of wet paintings, and we actually had to build a special storehouse for them to dry in, while in the meantime our customers all over the country were clamoring at the nondelivery of their goods, ordered from our profusely illustrated catalogue—a veritable art treasure in itself, as we stated in all our advertisements. In this crisis Slapdasher again proved his genius. He devised a great drying oven built of sheet iron, in which was pivoted a series of revolving trays. The last artist to handle a painting was told to place the canvas on one of the trays as it went by the opening in the oven. The heat was so regulated that one revolution of the tray was sufficient to dry a canvas, and as the dry paintings came around boys were there to remove them to a conveyor belt, which carried them to the shipping room below. Here the paintings were at once framed and loaded on the cars while still hot.

One difficulty that faced us from the start was how to sign the paintings. Jealousy among the artists made this a delicate question to decide, until I had an inspiration and suggested that the name Slapdasher be stenciled on all our work. And so it came about that the name of Slapdasher has taken a place with that of Rembrandt as one of the most prolific of the masters.



LOVE is for young men and for women of all ages.



THE garrulous man's arguments are generally sound.

WHITE SAILS

By HELEN HAMILTON DUDLEY

WHITE sails unfurled . . .
Beyond the straight, dark sea
Lies world on world of dreaming quietude,
Wherein no angry murmur of unrest
Disturbs the gentle swirls. Alone I flee
The brazen combat of a crowded day,
And let my being sink into repose
So deep, so infinitely calm and sweet
That all the flagrant thoughts of discontent
Fade from my mind, like pictures from a screen.

White sails unfurled . . .
When silently I slip
The moorings of the busy port of earth.
I want it thus—the vaguely shining dark,
Soft as an orchid, warm with waiting songs,
Where through the purple curtain of the sky
Shall gleam the radiance of a lonely star,
Like some fair jewel from out God's casket spilled.

White sails unfurled . . .
So be it when my barque
Sails bravely out across the misty dusk.
No bitter murmurings of grief's unrest
To rend the gentle swirls; just peace
And ghostly silence like to this,
When through the swaying whisper of the waves
God's voice drifts down to me.



MARKS—Say, old man, did I ever tell you about the awful fright I got on my wedding day?

PARKS—S-s-h-h! No man should speak that way about his wife!

DON JUAN DUPED*

By ALGERNON BOYESEN

CHARACTERS

AN INVALID
A STRANGER

SCENE: *The terrace of a Swiss hotel.*

TIME: *The present day.*

WHEN the curtain rises the INVALID is seen reclining on a steamer chair under a large red and white striped umbrella. At his left stands a round white wicker table, and beside the table a white wicker armchair with scarlet cushions. Behind the umbrella a section of the façade of the hotel appears: a stucco edifice with newly painted green shutters. To the right of the hotel a landscape is visible, in the foreground wooded mountain slopes, in the distance snow mountains wreathed with fleecy clouds. It is noon of a hot August day; the sunlight glares up from the white pebbles of the terrace.

For a moment the INVALID lies motionless gazing off at the right. The twittering of birds, the hum of bees, the tinkle of distant cow bells break the noonday stillness. Gradually his eyes fill with tears; his transparent hands, lying limp on the shawl which wraps his legs, stir uneasily. Presently the STRANGER appears on the terrace at the back entering from the hotel. He is a big man, bearded, virile, robust. He crosses to the right and stands viewing the landscape, cutting the while the end of a cigar. Then he strolls down to the armchair, seats himself, takes a gold matchbox from a waistcoat pocket, lights the cigar and exhales slowly, watching the little cloud of smoke dissolve in the sunlight with a pleasant air of physical beatitude. The INVALID coughs.

STRANGER (*sitting up*)

Oh—I beg your pardon. (*He rises quickly, wafting the smoke away with a motion of his hand.*) I didn't see you there.

INVALID (*raising a hand*)

I beg of you—don't move. (*The STRANGER stands hesitant.*) Sit down, please.

STRANGER (*reseating himself*)

You're quite certain you don't mind the smoke? I can just as well move.

INVALID

On the contrary, I enjoy the scent of a good cigar. I'm not what they call up here a T. B. Nerves, that's all—a case of nervous breakdown.

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(A pause. The STRANGER takes a puff at his cigar, scrutinizing the other out of the corner of his eye.)

STRANGER

One couldn't ask for a more tranquil spot than this. You're benefiting, no doubt, by your stay here?

INVALID

The doctor thinks so—or pretends to think so. I'm sure I hope I am. I—I've got to get well. I can't stand this much longer; I feel that I *can't*. I don't mind the day so much—it's the night—alone in the dark—thinking, thinking, thinking. (*His voice breaks.*) It's that that's killing me! (*He relapses into a melancholy reverie; the convulsive movements of his hands express his agitation.*)

STRANGER

You have my heartfelt sympathy, sir. There is no torture more harrowing than insomnia, especially when one's memories are—mournful.

INVALID (*raising himself on his elbows*)

Mournful! God, man, if you knew the memories I have to room with! (*Startled by the shrill terror in his own voice, he checks himself, then goes on apologetically.*) I beg your pardon; I am the last man to afflict an utter stranger with a rehearsal of my private agonies. (*The STRANGER makes a deprecatory gesture.*) The cry burst through my lips before I could stop it. I haven't the control of myself I used to have. It was the shock that did it—shivered something in me. I felt it give way—shatter shrilly like glass.

STRANGER

Shock?

INVALID

Yes. It was shock that caused my breakdown—a shock—a terrible shock—terrible! (*With an involuntary shudder.*) I wonder I didn't go stark mad then and there—rush shrieking through the city streets! (*Breaking off.*) I beg your pardon; I'm forgetting myself again. All this must be very unpleasant to you—and unintelligible. The average sane man doesn't realize that men have such things as nerves.

STRANGER

You wouldn't take me for a nervous man, then?

INVALID

No, I should not.

STRANGER

It would surprise you if I told you that I—well, stopped just the other side of where you are!

INVALID

You don't tell me! You certainly don't look like a sick man.

STRANGER

Oh, I am not now. I am quite sane now. I mean to say I've followed the path to the abyss, swayed shuddering on the brink—

INVALID (*with interest*)

Yes?

STRANGER

By a supreme effort of will I regained my equilibrium, faced about, retraced my steps.

INVALID

I understand. I've been through what you describe. But in my case it was just that final effort which precipitated me into the abyss. The circumstances no doubt were disparate—the same abyss approached by different paths.

STRANGER

I approached it by the main road, the road euphemistically called domestic infelicity.

INVALID

You are single now, I take it?

STRANGER

Divorced—some seven years ago.

INVALID

Just about when I married, seven years ago. Yes, just seven years—the fall of 1903.

STRANGER

The fall of 1903—odd coincidence. You appear to have thrust your neck into the slave's iron collar just as I—(*Breaking off*) I beg your pardon. You were perhaps more fortunate than I.

INVALID

If that were the case I should not be here now.

(*A brief silence, during which the STRANGER ruminates, pulling his beard through his fist.*)

STRANGER

I was the fortunate one; I escaped in time. Looking back now on those years of home life, they appear to me as the years passed in a madhouse must appear to a man who has recovered his sanity—years lost to life, lost to art—a chaos of Heaven and Hell!

INVALID (*with interest*)

Art? We are brother sculptors perhaps?

STRANGER

Brother artists, yes. All artists are brothers, sons of the same dream—sculptor, painter, poet, musician, is not each striving to express his spirit in terms of beauty, to make his soul immortal in a perfect form? I myself am a painter.

INVALID

I was a sculptor.

STRANGER (*ignoring the past tense*)

A sculptor, are you? No doubt I know your work. What did you say your name was?

INVALID

It would convey nothing to you.

STRANGER

You mean that in a worldly sense you have not been successful? Success! Bah! (*Misconstruing the other's intended interruption.*) Oh, I know! One can't afford to spurn it; one must have fuel to keep the fire burning, the flame aspiring. Seven years ago I yearned for it as bitterly as you no doubt do now—and now that I've "arrived" I ask myself what I have gained. I've changed my *béret* for a silk hat; I take three meals a day where I used to take one; the critics who then competed in damning my work now contend in praising it; the mob that used to jeer now gapes! I'm richer by a gray reality, poorer by a golden dream.

INVALID

The success you describe I never envied—the mouthing of my name by dilettante and critic, the muttered applause of the *bourgeois* public which frequents galleries and exhibitions. No, I dreamed

a grander dream. I pictured myself exulting in the holy pride that must have swelled the heart of Phidias when he saw Athens prostrate before the statue that had but lately left his shaping hands—a people adoring the image of his own heroic soul! He must have felt himself a god, and a god indeed he was! (*The flame in his face falling to ashes.*) I know it must sound absurd—such an ambition voiced by me—what I am now—(*He breaks off, stammering apologetically, while his thin fingers twiddle with the shawl across his knees.*)

STRANGER (*encouragingly*)

Not at all, not at all. You'll soon recover your lost strength here and realize your noble dream. What spot could be more propitious?

INVALID

I'm not sure that this is just the place for me. It was my intention to go on higher up; however, I stopped off.

STRANGER

You don't say? Like you, I was bound for the station above; like you, I stopped off here—why I hardly know.

INVALID

There was a reason in my case.

STRANGER

A reason, too, in mine. I've always had a certain curiosity about the place—my wife used to come here for her health.

INVALID

It was here that I first met my wife.

STRANGER (*leaning across the table*)

What! (*With interest.*) You say you first met her here—the lady who afterwards became your wife?

INVALID

I saw her for the first time on this very terrace seven years ago. It was night; some lads from the village across the lake were exercising with lighted brands for Indian clubs; she stood above them on the balcony there, her figure enflamed by the flare of the torches—

STRANGER (*struck with a thought, excitedly*)

You are a sculptor you say; you met her here for the first time, seven years

ago? Why, then you—(*Breaking off; to himself.*) No, it's impossible. (*He emphasizes the last word with a blow of his fist on the table.*) Impossible!

INVALID (*with a violent start*)

I beg of you—don't do that again, sir. My nerves won't stand it.

STRANGER

Sorry. Most thoughtless of me. I didn't mean to interrupt you. (*A pause.*) Won't you go on with your story? I find it—er—peculiarly interesting.

INVALID (*irritably*)

I must say I see nothing that exceeds the bounds of possibility in the mere fact—(*Breaking off.*) You can't imagine how a sudden noise like that upsets me! (*He falls silent.*)

STRANGER

Quite uncalled for on my part. As you were saying, what more natural: a young man holidaying in Switzerland meets a young and lovely woman unaccompanied by her husband and—

INVALID

I didn't say she had a husband.

STRANGER (*leaning back, his interest quenched*)

Oh—she wasn't married, then?

INVALID

As a matter of fact, she *was* married. I don't remember saying so, that's all. Yes, she had a husband, a big brutal fellow, an egoist in theory and practice, a boor with no sense of the delicate stuff—

STRANGER (*completing the phrase*)

The delicate stuff women's souls are made of. (*Throwing back his head, laughing harshly.*) Ha, ha! That sounds familiar!

INVALID (*astonished*)

Familiar?

STRANGER (*abruptly, sitting erect*)

Familiar, yes. The familiar plaint of the modern wife.

INVALID

Oh—you capped the phrase so aptly I thought for a moment—

STRANGER (*cutting him short*)

I know the type. A tongue that chatters of souls, and fingers that cling to the flesh instinctively as cling the tendrils of the vine. In this—er—particular case, was she physically attractive?

INVALID

How shall I tell you what her beauty meant to me? In her person dream and life met for me—became one. But I should explain that I was brooding over a statue, the woman of today fixed in marble for eternity, the type immortalized by an artist's style. A nude, of course, for what is so expressive as a naked body? I had her in my mind's eye, every modulation of her: the long, supple body, the narrow, adolescent hips, the small, hard, sterile breasts; a figure at once beautiful and ugly, *malaisante* and innocent, evil and pathetic. I was sitting here dreaming of her; I opened my eyes; in a flare of light I saw her above me on the balcony there; out of the night a hundred flames aspired to her feet. For a moment I had the illusion that the power of my imagination had actually formed her from the flux of things; that she was mine, my creation, born of the heat of my brain, the child of my frenzy!

STRANGER

Say Hermaphroditus, rather, strayed from his native hills.

INVALID

Yes, there undoubtedly was something androgynous about her charm; her chin was round and firm as a Greek minion's, and then her mouth, boyish, yet sweet and moist as an opening in a honeycomb. She put me in mind of a young Bacchus with those dark, thick curls clustering like grapes about the small head—

STRANGER (*musings*)

And yet what could be more feminine than the curve of her shoulder blades suggestive of folded wings—and those little pinches of white downy flesh where the breast fondles the arm—

INVALID (*in surprise*)

Why—one would almost say you'd known her!

STRANGER (*hastily*)

I've known such women.

INVALID

What is the power some women have of moving us with their least gesture so profoundly? Her cheek dimpled; my spirit rose like a lark in May. She smiled, gazing at my face through half-closed lids; the minutes grew light and iridescent, danced in the sun like soap bubbles. Once I remember we started to mount the Dent de Valion; halfway up she stopped, said simply, "I am tired," and my heart swelled so with tenderness that before I realized what I was doing I was kneeling before her caressing one of her slender feet, kissing the instep, uttering soft little sounds like a mother soothing a child's bruised limb. No doubt it was unmanly—

STRANGER (*emphatically*)

Not at all. It might happen to the most manly of men.

INVALID

I bedded her gently in deep grass, my coat for pillow, my hot gaze for coverlet. She laid one ankle on the other, clasped her hands behind her head and fixed me with her eyes. How shall I describe that gaze? It filled me with a strange shyness—a nervousness that seemed to tremble up from my very entrails. My face grew hot, my throat so tight I couldn't speak. I was so near her that I could hear the stir of her stays giving with her bosom's swell and subsidence; the soft recurrent sound marking the widening silence became unbearable to me; as it grew more rapid my anxiety grew more intense. I rose abruptly. "Let's go on," I said in a voice I didn't recognize as my own. She jumped to her feet, flushed as though I'd struck her. "You can go on to the top; I'm going back to the hotel." We retraced our steps in silence, she walking rapidly, head erect, I stumbling after, sadly discomfited, conscious of a fault but at a loss to name it.

STRANGER (*laughing harshly*)

Ho, ho!

INVALID (*offended*)

I see nothing to roar at in that.

STRANGER

I wasn't laughing at you, I assure you; I was chuckling over a recollection of my own boyhood—a somewhat similar experience. (*A pause.*) Do go on, please. I'm intensely interested.

INVALID (*settling back in his chair*)

I would rather you excused me.

STRANGER (*with an affectation of joviality*)

Come now; it's hardly fair to lead a chap up to the climax of so charming a romance and then leave him in the dark.

INVALID (*sadly*)

My story's as old as the world. To construct its conclusion will hardly tax your ingenuity.

STRANGER (*maliciously*)

Another triumph for Don Juan?

INVALID

You'll excuse me, but there's something in your tone—a lack of sympathy, to say the least; I'd rather drop the subject.

STRANGER

Lack of sympathy! On the contrary, I venture to say you'd go far before you found a listener better qualified than myself to understand your situation. Let me see: you descended the mountain; during the evening she remained in her room; the following morning when you met she did not appear to see you; when you approached her hesitatingly—

INVALID

She threw me a "Good morning" as one throws tuppence to a beggar. I fixed my departure for the morrow. I concluded that the affair was at an end.

STRANGER

But it wasn't.

INVALID

No. That very afternoon I came upon her here, sitting where you are sitting now. She closed her book, smiled a smile that drew me to her. She gave me a pressure of her hand, greeted me as though her coldness of the morning had existed only in my imagination. Confused, at a loss what to say, I asked her what she was reading.

STRANGER

A French novel, no doubt?

INVALID

Yes—a hideous story about cut-throats and procurers and their girls. The title escapes me.

STRANGER

I know the book—"Le Tigre et le Coquelicot."

INVALID

That was it. She read me a scene: two ruffians stripped to the waist fighting with bare knives for the possession of a girl of the streets by the light of a December moon—the victor pledges her in a handful of snow rosy with her late lover's blood—and the illustration showed the girl, a little wisp of a thing, in the arms of the conqueror, a monstrous brute, chested like a stallion, and at their feet the body bemired, mangled, asprawl. I gave vent to my horror. "No woman could do that!" I cried. She rose, laughing ambiguously, slapped me lightly on the cheek with the book, exclaimed, "What a judge of women you are!" and ran up the steps into the hotel.

STRANGER

You followed?

INVALID

I remained sitting here in the dusk, and before my mind's eye rose the vision of her white body ravished by violent hands, bruised with kisses that were like blows. I passed a feverish night. That second self who is a silent witness of all our conversations, a critical spectator of all our actions, accused me of having basely failed in an amorous conquest, failed from want of gallantry, courage, manhood; whispered persistently that the woman laughed at me, despised me. I got up feeling low-spirited, crestfallen; packed, sent my trunk off—

STRANGER

But you never got off?

INVALID

No. To reach the staircase I had to pass her door. It was ajar. I halted; an icy sweat suffused my limbs; my knees gave under me. Her praise of mutinous men, of violent, irreparable acts, rang in my head like a refrain. This

time I would play the man. I pushed open the door, entered the dusky room. It was cool and sweet with a scent like the fragrance of fresh fruit. I discerned her lying on the bed, a smooth sheet outlining her long body, the black curls a spot on the white pillow, and in the shadow that filled the arches of her brows her eyes gleamed like light on a naked sword. I had the sense that she was waiting—waiting for me. I don't think either of us spoke; whether it was she or I who sobbed, I don't know, but with the sound the suspense snapped—my head was on her breast and I was sobbing out wild things—*(He pauses and sighs.)* When I left her chamber—

STRANGER

You had seduced a married woman.

INVALID

The month that followed! We inhabited a world beyond the world, beyond ourselves, a region where flesh and spirit are one, where time is an outcast, law a sigh blown up from Hell. How shall I make you feel the beauty and mystery of our first night together? We spent it on the mountain top, close clasped, close kissed from dusk to dawn; together we saw night rise from the valley like a giant bird refolding its wings; together we—

STRANGER (*rudely cutting him short*)

I can very well imagine it. All this time I don't suppose you troubled yourself much about her rightful possessor?

INVALID

Her husband? To tell you the truth, I'd quite forgotten his existence. She rarely mentioned the cad—

STRANGER (*bridling*)

Cad!

INVALID

Cad! Before I've finished my narrative you'll agree with me that the man was a blackguard of the lowest description. Well, so a month passed, and with time my ardor cooled. I found myself daily thinking less of her and more of my work. I resolved to go back to my studio on the first of the month. The day arrived; I had said nothing to her about my in-

tended departure. I procrastinated; the next day hesitated, hinted; on the third day I blurted out the fact, followed it up with a mumbled apology: life was not all play—the time had come when we must pay for our pleasure with pain, the pain of parting—we separate each the richer by a precious memory—and so forth and so forth. She listened to me in silence, her eyes downcast, toying with the fingers of one of my hands; when my voice died out she raised her face and looked me full in the eyes. “Dearest,” she said solemnly, “dearest, there will be no parting.” I was seated by her on the grass; I jumped up shocked, shaken, as though an icy stream had suddenly submerged me; in a flash of clairvoyance I saw myself and this woman one, her life irrevocably linked to mine. She, too, rose to her feet, drew herself up to heroic stature, held out to me her hand as Arria might have offered to Pætus the ruddy dagger. Alone in the night, communing with her own soul, she had adopted the resolution; she had resolved to brave the banded world for my sake, for my sake to quit home and husband, family and friends. Henceforth she was mine, flesh of my flesh, soul of my soul!

Something within me writhed in soundless laughter while I stood there stammering out that I was poor, that my studio was an attic with a curtained corner for bedroom, that I had no prospects, nothing to offer her. She smiled benignly as one smiles away the troubles of a child. She had anticipated my refusal to accept her sacrifice; she would meet nobility with nobility; she would share my cot, work at my side, cook for me joyfully with her own hands. Objections were of no avail; there was no sacrifice she was not prepared to make for me. I determined definitely to refuse the sacrifice; need I say that I never summoned up the courage to do so? How could I decline the undivided possession of her person when she took for granted that it was a desire I had cherished in silence, not daring to voice it for fear of losing it? You will wonder why I wished to refuse the companionship of a young and beautiful woman. What shall I call it? Cowardice? Selfishness?

STRANGER

No. A holier impulse than that: the instinct of the artist to preserve his energies, his faculties, his self intact for the service of his art.

INVALID

Finally exasperated by my own impotence, I adopted a subterfuge—a stratagem. Even now I blush to think of it—*(Breaking off.)* Really, I can’t bring myself to confess it.

STRANGER

Why not? Matched against an antagonist stronger than yourself, you were driven to subterfuge. It was no more ignoble than the ruse a pregnant animal attacked, instinctively adopts to save her unborn offspring. It was subtle, too; in nine cases out of ten it would have been the means of your deliverance.

INVALID *(amazed)*

But I haven’t said that it failed!

STRANGER *(impatiently)*

It’s obvious that you wouldn’t have eloped with the woman if her husband had come in answer to your letter.

INVALID

Letter? I mentioned no letter!

STRANGER

Didn’t you just say that you sent the husband an anonymous letter in the hope that he would appear on the scene and claim his wife?

INVALID *(sitting erect)*

I said no such thing!

STRANGER *(leaning across the table, challengingly)*

You *did* no such thing?

INVALID

I don’t deny *doing* it; I simply don’t remember saying so. I was, in fact, under the impression that I evaded all mention of it.

STRANGER

I certainly understood you to say so.

INVALID

I must have thought aloud—it so times happens to me. How often would you know it?

STRANGER

How?

INVALID

The letter once in the post box, I felt myself saved. "Your wife is on the eve of eloping with a young artist. Hasten and you may yet be in time to save her honor and your own. A well wisher." I calculated the time it would take him to reach here; I reckoned on his dropping everything and rushing for the train. The following day I counted the hours. "Now he must be at Dijon," I would say, consulting the time table; or, "By this time he must have reached Geneva. At noon tomorrow he will be here"—I beg your pardon. What did you say?

STRANGER

Nothing. Excuse me. I merely cleared my throat.

INVALID

I used to sneak down to the little station, with beating heart wait for the train to emerge from the mouth of the tunnel, watch the tourists alight, eying them keenly in search of one answering to her description of her husband. Days passed—a week—

STRANGER (*boisterously*)

And he didn't come—he never came!

INVALID

How on earth did you divine that?

STRANGER (*confused*)

I—I inferred it. After all, what could be more natural?

INVALID

Natural? Natural to abandon your lawful wife to the first comer? (*Shrilly.*) Natural! I call it bestial, sir, inhuman, monstrous!

STRANGER

Oh, you do, do you? I don't suppose it ever occurred to you that he, the husband, as well as you, may have had an art he loved, a dream he cherished?

INVALID

What *do* you mean?

STRANGER

I mean that the artist in him may very well have overcome the conventional man—just as it did in your case.

INVALID (*excitedly*)

You don't mean, you can't mean that you credit the man with deliberately staying away, *deliberately forcing me to take his wife off his hands?*

STRANGER

I picture him, your letter open in his hand, mutely thanking God for his deliverance.

INVALID

Impossible! No! I refuse to believe any man capable of so dastardly an action. No man could be so cruel, so vile, so vulpine!

STRANGER (*vehemently, punctuating his tirade with blows on the table*)

Cruel? Cruel to surrender to a lover the wife he coveted? Cruel to free a woman from a man who was killing her, whom she was killing? Cruel to pair turtle doves? Vile? No! (*With genuine feeling.*) At the worst he acted unconventionally, but I maintain wisely, humanely, acted so far as he could judge for the well being of all three, the husband, the wife and the lover.

INVALID (*holding up his hands protestingly*)

Really—I must ask you to be less emphatic. I see no occasion for such vehemence on your part.

STRANGER

I enter into the husband's point of view, that's all.

INVALID

You could hardly speak more warmly if it were yourself you were defending.

STRANGER

I take his part; for the moment I am the man.

INVALID

I'd ask nothing better. (*Atremble with impotent rage.*) I'd—I'd make you pay for all I've suffered at your hands!

STRANGER

I'm sorry, genuinely sorry to hear that you've suffered, but have you stopped to take into consideration what *he* may have suffered at *her* hands? Do you know what it is to live your nights and days with a woman whose passion for you no

passion can abate, whose vision of voluptuousness no human love could realize? A woman who exacts that your every sensation, your every thought begin and end in her, that your eyes shall be blind to every beauty in the world but her beauty, your ears deaf to every melody in the world but the music of her voice? A woman who, not content with possessing your body, would finger your heart of hearts, creep into the sanctuary of your soul, lie naked there? A woman who agonizes because spirit cannot clasp spirit through the barrier of flesh, who blames you when she should blame God, whose insensate anguish goads her to torment you as life torments her?

INVALID (*brokenly*)

Do I know? Man, I burned in that hell for seven years!

STRANGER

So did he.

INVALID

What right had he to sentence me to that torture? I had wronged him, if you will, but then—there is such a thing as mercy.

STRANGER

Does a drowning man stop to consider the peril of the swimmer who offers him a hand?

INVALID

If he could see me now—if he knew what I've suffered, though he had a heart of stone he'd pity me—he'd pity me! Perhaps the man didn't realize what he was doing to me; perhaps I wrong him. But you who are an artist, you can appreciate my torment; you must know those sublime moments when the splendor of one's dream seems too rich to bear, when pure forms of beauty are born to the mind's eye with delirious rapidity, press about one like disembodied spirits praying a God for life, and the desire to fix them in plastic form swells the heart with an anguish that is at once an ache and an ecstasy. You must know what it is—

STRANGER

—to see them vanish like ghosts at the touch of a small hot hand, to stand with face wet with tears of impotence before the unfinished work, the never-to-be-completed masterpiece.

INVALID

That is an anguish only an artist can know.

STRANGER

For all you know, he *was* an artist.

INVALID

A reason the more for sparing me. He could have rid himself of her in so many other ways: told her he didn't love her, divorced her, abandoned her—

STRANGER

Knowing the woman, how can you say that? You must know that the threat of divorce fell like a broken sword before her threat, shattered like a weapon of glass against her shield—the *menace of suicide*.

INVALID (*starting violently at the last word*)

You *must* have known her!

STRANGER

My wife was such a woman. Nightly we played the ghastly farce; there's not a comic word, a tragic gesture of the scene I don't know as an old actor recalls the business of his favorite part. You sit musing before the fire; she fidgets about the room; takes up a book, glances at a page, drops it; puffs at a cigarette, complains that it doesn't draw; finally comes to you for diversion, puts you through your amorous paces. Tonight you are weary, sick at heart, dissatisfied with the day's work. You play the ancient role without ardor; you answer to the old cues without conviction. "Don't you love me?" "Of course I do." "As much as when you married me?" "You know I do." "You don't say it as you did." She rises from your knee. "Nobody loves me!" In every nerve in your body you feel the impending storm. You protest your love, simulate fervor, cut comic capers, caress with the hand that aches to strike—lie vanquished finally, humiliated in the arms that bind you like chains, while hate, welling up, fills your throat with blood and tears—

INVALID

And through the long night you lie staring into the darkness, the woman's sleeping body a sodden weight upon your limbs, asking your soul: "Are the re-

maining years of my life to be spent in a succession of such shameful battles? Am I so to squander days never to be relived—energies never to be regained?"

STRANGER

You determine to rebel: "Under the pretense of loving me this woman is killing me, unmanning me, wearing down my nerves, my strength, my pride, breaking my will, cancelling my destiny! Come what may, tomorrow I'll reclaim my liberty, tomorrow be free!"

INVALID

On the morrow you make known to her your resolution: "My decision is irrevocable. Nothing you can say or do will alter it." She staggers under the blow, rallies, responds tremulously: "Take your freedom, dear. Even that, the supreme sacrifice for a woman who loves, I am ready to make for your sake. Good-bye." You kiss her forehead; you murmur your thanks; you move stealthily toward the door—at the threshold her voice arrests you. "Promise me one thing." You promise. "What is it?" "Promise me that you will lay me in my coffin as you find me. I can't bear the thought of anyone else handling my poor little body after I am dead." You turn back: "You're not serious! You wouldn't—promise me you won't!" "If I may live with you and love you I don't wish to die. Without you life would be a burden I haven't the courage to bear." The vision of the mangled body, the ensanguined bed, rises before you. Would she do it? Who can say? At all events the doubt paralyzes you. You do not go; you are lost. You are stripped of your last arm; henceforth you are a slave. (*Passionately*) The menace of suicide! That was the whip with which she brought me to her feet. For seven years she cracked it over my head; for seven years I cowered before it like a captive beast at the sight of the red iron. She would hold a pistol to her temple. "Shall I pull the trigger? You have only to say yes to be rid of me once and for all." Taunt me, dare me to say yes! Ha! I see it all now! I was his dupe, the husband's dupe! He was as

weak, as cowardly as I. He ached to kill her; he hadn't the courage to strike the blow!

STRANGER

Kill her? God, no! I tell you he loved her, loved her till he hated her, hated her till he loved her. He was tempted to kill himself, but her—never! He couldn't have lived with the thought, the thought of her small bloody face deep down in the thick wet earth. He held her life in his hand; he spared it.

INVALID

Spared her life! Spared it! He slipped into my hand the knife he dared not thrust home!

STRANGER (*starting to his feet*)

You don't mean— No! You didn't murder her?

INVALID (*shrilly*)

I didn't think she'd do it! Before God I didn't believe she'd ever do it!

STRANGER (*gripping the other by the arm*)

She did do it? She is dead? (*shaking him roughly.*) Say she's not dead!

INVALID (*whimpering*)

I never believed she'd do it—she had hardly closed the door behind her when the explosion shook the studio. I rushed into the bedroom, groped to the bedside in the dark, leaned over her, fondled her, cried to her in the dark. Then I struck a match—(*Leaping to his feet with a shriek.*) I see it still—feel it still on my face—warm and thick on my hands— It's that that's killing me! (*Clinging to the other, broken, sobbing.*) Alive she was killing me; dead she is killing me!

STRANGER (*mastering with an effort his emotion*)

Calm yourself, man. (*Throwing back his broad shoulders, inhaling deeply.*) So—lean on me. (*He puts his arm gently about the dying man's shoulders.*) I'll help you to your room—sit with you a while. (*As they start upstairs.*) I shouldn't have asked you for the story—but as God is my witness I never believed it would end like that.

CURTAIN

IDYLLE

Par MICHEL PROVINS

"Un tour de valse chez le comte et la comtesse de Chaugrenot," prétexte pris par les hôtes et un certain nombre de parents amis pour écouler dans le mariage un stock de jeunes gens et un lot de jeunes filles. De frais ménages sont aussi invités pour corser la figuration et donner l'exemple.—Les danses suivent leur cours, aimées non pas pour elles-mêmes, mais pour l'essai des contacts. Dans les coins où l'on cause, on se croirait à une foire, tellement il semble qu'on discute sur les qualités, les conditions, la valeur d'une marchandise.

Au billard où l'on fume, deux amis se retrouvent, Gaston Ribel et Charles Dambreuil, tous deux c marades de fête, n'ayant jamais eu d'autre profession, tous deux aussi fils d'archi-millionnaires moralement pourris dès le herceau, et à l'âge d'homme, ne connaissant d'autre énergie que celle qu'il faut pour l'immédiate satisfaction du désir qui passe. Charles s'est marié il y a un an, hi toire de réaliser une magnifique spéculation. Gaston a continué la noce dans les limites permises par s s usuriers, qu'un conseil judiciaire donné à leur jeune débiteur a rendus timides.

CHARLES, *abordant son ami affalé sur un divan.*—Eh bien, quoi? . . . Tu piques la mélancolie?

GASTON, *s'étirant.*—Ah! mon pauvre vieux, j'y suis bien dans la gloire à Cambronne!

CHARLES.—Pour cause de scène dans la famille?

GASTON.—Scène historique aujourd'hui, parce que j'ai demandé la levée de mon conseil judiciaire. Je ne peux pourtant pas continuer à vivre avec deux mille francs par mois comme un crève-la-faim! C'est pas une existence . . . Autant travailler alors!

CHARLES.—Dis pas de folies! . . .

GASTON.—Qu'est-ce que tu veux? On pense aux extrémités! . . . Si t'avais entendu cette mercuriale! . . . "Canaille, fils dénaturé, drôle! . . ." J'en ai eu des épithètes! . . . Et que je faisais rougir mes ancêtres! . . . Et que j'étais la

honte des cheveux blancs de mes paternels! . . . D'abord ça serait difficile: maman se teint en blond vénitien et papa se passe au brou de noix. Donc des mots pour m'épater!

CHARLES.—Mais le résultat?

GASTON.—Bien, le résultat? c'est qu'ils continuent: lok-out de la galette. "Ou alors, marie-toi, ont-ils déclaré avec un geste classique! Deviens un garçon sérieux . . . Fais souche d'honnêtes gens! . . ." Non mais, vois-tu les rejetons de ma souche? Me vois-tu marié, moi, Gaston? le Gaston à la Nénette et à la Titine?

CHARLES.—Eh! Eh! tout de même le jeu en vaudrait la chandelle! Tes auteurs n'ont pas posé de conditions à l'ultimatum conjugal?

GASTON.—Non. . . "Donne-nous une belle-fille qui sera la joie de nos vieux jours," ont-ils simplement conclu dans une phrase de confiserie.

CHARLES.—Et ils ont juré qu'à cette condition ton conseil serait levé?

GASTON.—J'te crois. Même qu'on y ajoutera une dot d'un million!

CHARLES.—Eh bien! mon cher, tu as une jolie façon de te payer le profil de tes parents!

GASTON.—J'te devine! Epouser! Je ne marche pas. . . J'ai horreur du mariage. Je ne suis pas un homme à femme unique. Ni un type qu'on emprisonne!

CHARLES.—Est-ce que je suis ça, moi, jeune Eliacin? Voilà douze mois que je fais partie des conjugaux, jamais je ne me suis tant amusé! Je te le conseille uniquement comme moyen d'embêter tes père et mère.

GASTON.—Comment? Mais ils seront ravis!

CHARLES.—Cela dépend qui tu épouseras!

GASTON, *frappé, le regardant*.—Je commence à subodorer ta pensée! Col-ler à mes auteurs un mouton à cinq pattes, un laideron de première classe? . . .

CHARLES.—Et sans sou ni maille! . . .

GASTON.— . . . Ni situation? . . . Je te suis! leur fourrer ce rossignol, c'est ce qui les fera le plus enrager! . . . Ils en jauniront de dépit! . . . (*Enchanté.*) Ah! ah! leur belle petite vanité bourgeoise, qu'ils mettent au-dessus de tout! . . . Rien à répliquer puisque la demoiselle sera honorable!

CHARLES.—Et il faudra lâcher la dot promise, te libérer du conseil! Tu n'as pas un meilleur moyen de retrouver ton crédit et ta liberté!

GASTON.—Génial! Sans compter que même au point de vue moral! . . .

CHARLES.—Oh! celui-là, laisse-le tranquille. Tes parents t'ont fait une ros-serie, tu leur répliques; c'est parfait, ne cherche pas avantage. D'autant plus que la chère enfant que tu choisiras n'aura pas précisément une existence couleur de rose!

GASTON.—Qu'est-ce que tu veux! Il faut toujours une victime!

CHARLES.—Evidemment! . . . Allons, tu as de l'étoffe!

GASTON.— . . . Oui, seulement il faut trouver le sujet!

CHARLES, *d'un geste large, montrant la rangée de jeunes filles*.—L'embarras du choix! . . . Au plus offrant et dernier enchérisseur! . . . Et devenir Mme. Gaston Ribel est une chose qui ne se refuse pas. Regarde si on te lorgne.

GASTON, *examinant*.—Curieux! . . . Quand on veut une jolie femme on n'en trouve pas, et quand on en cherche une laide? . . .

CHARLES.—Eh bien! et la petite noi-raude dont les épaules font porte-man-teau, là-bas, près de la porte?

GASTON.—Oh! sacrédié, oui! . . . Je ne l'avais pas vue! . . .

CHARLES.—Elle est d'une laideur très convenable . . . pas repoussante. . . . On peut même lui trouver des qualités!

GASTON.—Blague pas! (*Réfléchissant.*) Tu la connais?

CHARLES.—C'est Mlle. Marguerite Mongrabin, fille d'un officier qui s'est fait tuer quelque part pour le service de la patrie. Ça vit avec sa mère! Ça fait ses chapeaux et ses robes. . . . Et c'est bien élevé! . . . On dit même qu'elle est très intelligente!

GASTON.—Tant pis! . . . parce que moi? . . . Et puis les femmes intelli-gentes? . . . Zut! . . . Enfin, je pas-serai par là-dessus pour aboutir! Si tu me présentais?

Charles le présente, Mlle. Mongrabin stupé-faite, croit d'abord à une méprise. Mais pas du tout. Gaston Ribel est des plus aimables. Il s'installe près d'elle, trouve de la conversa-tion, demande même le cotillon, qu'on lui ac-corde. Au petit jour, on se sépare déjà très camarades. Gaston qu'on ne voyait plus dans les soirées, se montre partout pour rencontrer la jeune fille. Un soir, jugeant que l'opinion est suffisamment allumée, que ses parents s'alarment, que les choses semblent au point, il se décide à avoir avec Marguerite l'explication décisive "et à lui ouvrir son cœur."

GASTON.—Eh bien, mademoiselle Marguerite, vous qui devinez si bien un tas de machines difficiles, car vous êtes une savante, avez-vous résolu ce pro-blème: Comment se fait-il qu'un garçon comme Gaston Ribel, réfractaire en-durci au monde et à ses pompes, y ait été converti aussi rapidement et aussi complètement?

MARGUERITE, *un peu inquiète*.—Je ne l'ai pas résolu, pour la bonne raison que je ne me le suis pas posé. D'abord, j'ignorais que votre assiduité fût une conversion.

GASTON.—Une fameuse, je vous en répons! (*La regardant.*) Vous n'aper-cevez pas qui a pu faire le miracle?

MARGUERITE, *vague*.—Pas du tout!

GASTON.—Allons, malgré le trouble que j'en éprouve, je vois qu'il me faudra parler clairement. C'est vous qui l'avez fait, ce miracle, mademoiselle Margue-rite, oui, vous, par votre charme, par votre esprit, par tout ce qui est en vous de si personnel, de si original, de si sé-duisant. . . . Je ne sais si ce sont les mots qu'il faut, mais c'est bien ce que je pense.

MARGUERITE, *un peu douloureuse-ment*.—Ne vous moquez pas de moi, je vous prie.

GASTON.—Ah! je vous jure bien. . . .

MARGUERITE, *l'interrompant*.—Ne ju-

rez pas! . . . Je sais que ma personne n'a rien de séduisant ni de charmant. Je suis laide. . . .

GASTON.—Mais non, vous n'êtes pas laide! . . . Est-ce possible de se mécaniser à ce point! Vous avez des cheveux admirables! . . . Et moi j'adore les beaux cheveux! . . . Vous avez des yeux . . . des yeux . . . je cherche le mot . . . des yeux parlants! . . . comme ces yeux de bon chien qui disent tant de choses. (*Elle rit.*) Ca vous amuse. Je ne suis pas orateur, je dis des bêtises . . . mais elles vous prouvent ma sincérité.

MARGUERITE, *flatée, se prenant malgré elle*.—Dans ma pauvre personne, mes yeux sont, en effet, ce qu'il y a de moins mal.

GASTON.—Superbes, je vous dis. C'est eux qui m'ont attiré près de vous. Vous admettez bien, pourtant, que si je me suis fait présenter, si je préfère votre compagnie à celle de toutes les autres jeunes filles qui, cependant, se donnent un mal énorme pour attirer le client, c'est qu'il y a une raison. Et une puissante raison? . . . Enfin, voyons, tout de même?

MARGUERITE.—Peut-être avez-vous voulu seulement vous amuser d'un pauvre joujou? . . . rechercher je ne sais quelle curiosité? . . .

GASTON, *jouant l'indignation*.—Oh! . . . je ne mérite pas de pareilles suppositions! . . . Ai-je eu une phrase, une attitude qui vous autorise à me répondre de cette façon?

MARGUERITE.—C'est vrai, pardon; vous avez été un très loyal ami. Mais que voulez-vous, les amertumes de la vie m'ont rendue un peu craintive . . . injuste même. Et puis, il m'aurait fallu vraiment une dose de vanité pour croire que j'aie pu, si peu que ce soit, attirer votre attention. Par votre situation, par vous même, vous n'avez qu'à désirer, qu'à choisir.

GASTON.—Choisir! . . . On me répète toujours ce mot! . . . Ou cela, choisir? Parmi toutes ces candidates au mariage d'affaires, coquettes, bluffeuses, flirteuses, qui n'ont pas plus de cœur que ma pantoufle? . . . Merci bien! Moi aussi, je me méfie! . . . Je ne veux pas de celles qui me visent. Et je sais parfaitement que

vous, au moins, vous ne m'avez pas visé! . . . (*Elle sourit.*) Cela vous fait rire? . . . Tenez! c'est ça que j'aime en vous: la franchise, la droiture, la simplicité! . . .

MARGUERITE.—Si j'avais été gâtée par la chance, je serais peut-être comme les autres. Il ne faut pas m'en faire un mérite.

GASTON.—Je trouve que si. Vous avez une âme délicieuse . . . c'est frais, neuf, naïf dans le bon sens. . . Je m'exprime toujours mal, mais vous voyez mon idée. Eh bien, c'est cela que j'aime en vous, parce que je suis aussi un garçon très simple, timide. Et malgré les apparences, je n'ai pas été heureux. Mes parents m'ont toujours opprimé! . . . Je n'ai pas pu travailler comme je l'aurais voulu . . . J'avais des projets. . . Ils en ont eu tellement peur qu'ils m'ont fourré un conseil judiciaire. . . . Croyez-vous? . . . Pour étouffer mon essor! . . . pour juguler ma pensée! . . . mon initiative!

MARGUERITE, *prise à la pitié féminine*.—Moi qui croyais que vous aviez tous les plaisirs, toutes les joies!

GASTON.—La légende! . . . La réalité est toute contraire! . . . Vous le voyez, je suis à la fois un homme d'étude, un meurtri et un concentré. Il me faut une femme qui me comprenne, qui m'éclaire, qui me console. Je suis aussi un vertueux . . . J'ai besoin du mariage dans le sens élevé où on le comprenait autrefois. J'ai senti instinctivement que seule vous pouviez être cette créature d'élite que je cherche! Et en devenant votre ami, chaque jour je l'ai compris davantage.

MARGUERITE, *se troublant tout à fait*.—Taisez-vous! . . . Ne dites pas! . . .

GASTON.—Puisque c'est vrai . . . il faut bien vous le dire, pourtant, que je vous aime!

MARGUERITE, *très pâle, convaincue, charmée comme toute femme le serait, prise aux mêmes sources*.—Mon ami!

GASTON, *lui prenant la main*.—Répondez-moi! . . . Regardez-moi! . . . Je veux entendre et lire votre consentement . . . de vous seule d'abord . . . bien de vous!

MARGUERITE.—J'ai très peur . . . et pourtant je vous le donne!

GASTON.—Peur de quoi? . . . Encore une fois, quel motif aurais-je pour agir comme je le fais, si je n'obéissais pas seulement à mon cœur.

MARGUERITE, *qui ne peut deviner*.—C'est vrai.

GASTON.—Alors, vous croyez en moi?

MARGUERITE, *tout à fait persuadée*.—Je crois en vous!

GASTON, *ne résistant pas à la roserie suprême*.—Vous verrez, mon aimée, comme je saurai vous rendre heureuse! . . .

*Un télégramme et une lettre:
Télégramme de Gaston à Charles:*

“ . . . Affaire dans le sac. D'abord tirage; ensuite petite emballée. J'ai le clavier des femmes! Parents font une de ces g . . . ! C'est à mourir de joie! Après bénédiction, rigolade!”

Fin de lettre de Marguerite à sa plus intime amie:

“ . . . Maintenant que je t'ai donné tous les détails de cette merveilleuse aventure, tu en sais aussi long que moi. Dans un mois, je serai Mme Gaston Ribel . . . Un rêve d'or avec du bonheur, car c'est bien le cas où l'on peut dire et où je me répète que je suis aimée pour moi-même!”



CHEMIN DE FER

Par LOUIS MANDIN

SUR le pont du chemin de fer,
 Sous qui s'étend la voie et le talus d'arbustes clairs,
 Je suis le rêve,
 Immobile et muet comme l'éternité,
 Le rêve qui s'accoude et sent à lui monter la fièvre
 Des grands trains emportés,
 La chaude vapeur de la vie,
 La trépidation grondante des secondes,
 Tout cela qui n'est rien qu'une vitesse épanouie,
 Mais qui, frappant mon rêve en mon âme profonde,
 Si tressaillante dans mon immobilité,
 Evoque et fait en moi surgir ces entités
 Qui sont tout le secret du monde:
 Le temps, l'éternité.
 Et la vitesse et l'immobilité
 Font, se mêlant en moi, crier le mystère du monde.

HAVOC

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Arthur Dorward, a young American journalist in Vienna, secures for his paper a great "beat"—a full account of a private conference between the Emperor and the Czar, and attempts to get out of the country with his papers. On the train with him is David Bellamy, an English diplomatic agent, and several Austrian secret service men. Dorward is attacked by the Austrians, thrown from the train and his papers taken from him. Bellamy then plots to secure the papers and enlists the help of Louise Idiale, a Servian opera singer, who proceeds to encourage the attentions of Von Behrling, in charge of the Austrian party, and induces him to agree to sell the papers to the English government. He turns over to Bellamy a packet, found to contain only blank paper, for which the English have paid twenty thousand pounds, and Bellamy is thereby discredited. Von Behrling is found murdered that same evening. Stephen Laverick, a broker, finds the body and takes with him the wallet found on the dead man. He uses the money to tide over a business crisis and helps his late partner, Arthur Morrison, to get out of the country. He buys off a man, James Shepherd, who has evidence tending to incriminate Morrison, and takes the latter's half-sister, Zoe, to dinner at a restaurant, where he makes the acquaintance of Mlle. Idiale. She visits him at his office, ostensibly to buy stocks, then invites him to come to the Opera and join her at supper later. There she charges him with knowledge of the pocketbook taken from the dead man, and demands that he deliver to her a document contained therein. He looks into the pocketbook at his office and finds the papers she has spoken of; he promises Mlle. Idiale to come to her apartment in the evening and bring them. During the day he discovers a plot to rob his safe. On his way to keep his appointment he is mysteriously attacked, but beats off his assailant. Arriving at his destination, he meets Lassen, Mlle. Idiale's manager, who attempts unsuccessfully to get possession of the papers. Bellamy later comes to the house and surprises Lassen, who has evidently been bribed by the Austrians. Laverick and Bellamy meet at a hotel; the latter demands the document.

This novel began in the September SMART SET. Back copies of the magazine may be had from any newsdealer or the publishers.

XXXIII

"**W**HAT claim have you to it?" Laverick asked quickly.

"I might retort, but I will not," Bellamy replied. "Time is too short. I will answer you by explaining who the man was and what that document consists of. The man's name was Von Behrling, and he was a trusted agent of the Austrian secret service. The document of which he was robbed contains a verbatim report of the conference which recently took place at Vienna between the Emperor of Germany, the Emperor of Austria and the Czar of Russia. It contains the details of a plot against this country and the undertakings entered

into by those several Powers. I want that document, Laverick. Have I established my claim?"

"You have," Laverick answered. "Why on earth didn't you come to me before? Don't you believe that I should have listened to you as readily as to Mademoiselle Idiale?"

"I wish that I had come," Bellamy admitted; "and yet, here is the truth, Laverick, because the truth is best. Twenty-two years lie between us and the time when we knew anything of one another. To me, therefore, you are a stranger. I had my spies following Von Behrling that night. I know that you took the pocketbook from his dead body. If you did not murder him yourself, the

deed was done by an accomplice of yours. How was I to trust you? We are speaking naked words, my friend. We are dealing with naked truths. To me you were a murderer and a thief. A word from me and you would have realized the value of that document. I tell you frankly that Austria would give you almost any sum for it today."

Laverick, strong man though he was, was conscious of a sudden weakness. He raised his hand to his forehead and drew it away—wet. He struggled desperately for self-control.

"Bellamy," he said, "here's truth for truth. I am not on my trial before you. Believe me, man, for God's sake!"

"I'll try," Bellamy promised. "Go on."

"That night I stayed at my office late because I saw ruin before me on the morrow. I left it meaning to go straight home. I lit a cigarette near that entry, and by the light of a match, as I was throwing it away, I saw the murdered man. I think for a time I was paralyzed. The pocketbook was half dragged out from his pocket. Why I looked inside it I don't know. I had some sort of wild idea that I must find out who he was. Mind you, though, I should have given the alarm at once, but there wasn't a soul in the street. There was a man lurking in the entry and I chased him, unsuccessfully. When I came back the body was still there and the street empty. I looked inside that pocketbook, which would have been in the possession of his murderer but for my unexpected appearance. I saw the notes there. Once more I went out into the street. I gave no alarm—I am not attempting to explain why. I was like a man made suddenly mad. I went back to my office and shut myself in."

Bellamy pointed to the glasses silently. The waiter came forward and refilled them.

"Bellamy," Laverick continued, "your career and my career lie far apart, and yet at their backbone, as there is at the backbone of every man's life, there must be something of the same sort of ambition. My grandfather lived and died a member of the Stock Exchange,

honored and well thought of. My father followed in his footsteps. I, too, was there. Without becoming wealthy, the name I bear has become known and respected. Failure, whatever one may say, means a broken life and a broken honor. I sat in my office and I knew that the use of those notes for a few days might save me from disgrace, might keep the name which my father and grandfather had guarded so jealously free from shame. I would have paid any price for the use of them. I would have paid with my life, if that had been possible. Think of the risk I ran—the danger I am now in. I deposited those notes the next day as security at my bank, and I met all my engagements. The crisis is over. Those notes are in a safe deposit vault in Chancery Lane. I only wish to heaven that I could find the owner!"

"And the document?" Bellamy asked. "The document?"

"It is in the hotel safe," Laverick answered.

Bellamy drew a long sigh of relief. Then he emptied his tumbler and lit a cigarette.

"Laverick," he declared, "I believe you."

"Thank God!" Laverick muttered.

"I am no crime investigator," Bellamy went on thoughtfully. "As to who killed Von Behrling, or why, I cannot now form the slightest idea. That twenty thousand pounds, Laverick, is Secret Service money, paid by me to Von Behrling only half an hour before he was murdered, in a small restaurant there, for what I supposed to be the document. He deceived me by making up a false packet. The real one he kept. He deserved to die, and I am glad he is dead."

Laverick's face was suddenly hopeful. "Then you can take these notes!" he exclaimed.

Bellamy nodded. "In a few days," he said, "I shall take you with me to a friend of mine—a Cabinet minister. You shall tell him the story exactly as you've told it to me, and restore the notes."

Laverick laughed like a child. "Don't think I'm mad," he apologized, "but I am not a person like you, Bellamy,

used to adventures and this sort of wild happenings. I'm a steady-going, matter-of-fact Englishman, and this thing has been like a hateful nightmare to me. I can't believe that I'm going to get rid of it."

Bellamy smiled. "It's a great adventure," he declared, "to come to anyone like you. To tell you the truth, I can't imagine how you had the pluck—don't misunderstand me; I mean the moral pluck—to run such a risk. Why, at the moment you used those notes," Bellamy continued, "the odds must have been about twenty to one against your not being found out."

"One doesn't stop to count the odds," Laverick said grimly. "I saw a chance of salvation and I went for it. And now about this letter?"

Bellamy rose to his feet. "On the King's service!" he whispered softly.

They walked once more to the cashier's desk. A stranger greeted them. Laverick produced his receipt.

"I should like the packet I deposited here this evening," he said. "I am sorry to trouble you, but I find that I require it unexpectedly."

The clerk glanced at the receipt and up at the clock. "I am afraid, sir," he answered, "that we cannot get at it before morning."

"Why not?" Laverick demanded, frowning.

"Mr. Dean has just gone home," the man declared, "and he is the only one who knows the combination on the 'L' safe. You see, sir," he continued, "we keep this particular safe for documents, and we did not expect that anything would be required from it tonight."

Bellamy drew Laverick away. "After all," he said, "perhaps tomorrow morning would be better. As a matter of fact, I don't think that I should have dared to receive it without making some special preparations. I can get some plain clothes men here upon whom I can rely, at nine o'clock."

They strolled back into the hall. "Tell me," Laverick asked, "do you know who the man was who forged my name to the order a few hours ago?"

Bellamy nodded. "It was Adolf Kahn,

an Austrian spy. I have been watching him for days. If they'd given him the paper I had four men at the door, but it would have been touch and go. He is a very prince of conspirators, that fellow. To tell you the truth, I think I might as well go home."

Bellamy was drawing on his gloves when the hall porter brought a note to Laverick.

"A messenger has just left this for you, sir," he explained.

Laverick tore open the envelope. The contents consisted of a few words only, written on plain notepaper and in a handwriting which was strange to him:

Ring up 1232 Gerrard.

Laverick frowned, turned over the half-sheet of paper and looked once more at the envelope. Then he passed it on to his companion. "What do you make of that, Bellamy?" he asked.

Bellamy smiled as he perused and returned it. "What could anyone make of it?" he remarked laconically. "Do you know the handwriting?"

"Never saw it before, to my knowledge," Laverick answered. "What should you do about it?"

"I think," Bellamy suggested, "that I should ring up Number 1232 Gerrard."

They crossed the hall and Laverick entered one of the telephone booths. "1232 Gerrard," he said.

The connection was made almost at once.

"Who are you?" Laverick asked.

"I am speaking for Miss Zoe Leneveu," was the reply. "Are you Mr. Laverick?"

"I am," Laverick answered. "Is Miss Leneveu there? Can she speak to me herself?"

"She is not here," the voice continued. "She was fetched away in a hurry from the theater—we understood by her brother. She left two and sixpence with the doorkeeper here to ring you up and explain that she had been summoned to her brother's rooms, 25 Jermyn Street, and would you kindly go on there."

"Who are you?" Laverick demanded.

There was no reply. Laverick remained speechless, listening intently. He

stood still with the receiver pressed to his ear. Was it his fancy, or was that really Zoe's protesting voice which he heard in the background? It was a woman or a child who was speaking—he was almost sure that it was Zoe.

"Who are you?" he asked fiercely. "Miss Leneveu is there with you. Why does she not speak for herself?"

"Miss Leneveu is not here," was the answer. "I have done what she desired. You can please yourself whether you go or not. The address is 25 Jermyn Street. Ring off."

The connection was gone. Laverick laid down the receiver and stepped out of the booth.

"I must be off at once," he said to Bellamy. "You'll be round in the morning?"

Bellamy smiled. "After all," he remarked, "I have changed my plans. I shall not leave the hotel. I am going to telephone round to my man to bring me some clothes. By the bye, do you mind telling me whether this message which you have just received had anything to do with the little affair in which we are interested?"

"Not directly," Laverick answered, after a moment's hesitation. "The message was from a young lady. I have to go and meet her."

"A young lady whom you can trust?" Bellamy inquired quietly.

"Implicitly," Laverick assured him.

"She spoke herself?"

"No, she sent a message. Excuse me, Bellamy, won't you, but I must really go."

"By all means," Bellamy answered.

They stood at the entrance to the hotel together while a taxicab was summoned. Laverick stepped quickly in and gave the chauffeur the address.

Bellamy watched him drive off. Then he sighed. "I think, my friend Laverick," he said softly, "that you will need someone to look after you tonight."

XXXIV

CERTAINLY it was a strange little gathering that waited in Morrison's room for the coming of Laverick. There

was Lassen—flushed, ugly, breathing heavily and watching the door with fixed, beady eyes. There was Adolf Kahn, the man who had strolled out from the Milan Hotel as Laverick had entered it, leaving the forged order behind him. There was Streuss—stern and desperate with anxiety. There was Morrison himself, in the clothes of a workman, worn to a shadow, with the furtive gleam of terrified guilt shining in his sunken eyes, and the slouched shoulders and broken mien of the habitual criminal. There was Zoe, around whom they were all standing with anger burning in her cheeks and gleaming out of her passion-filled eyes. She, too, like the others, watched the door. So they waited.

Streuss, not for the first time, moved to the window, and drawing aside the curtains looked down into the street.

"Will he come, this Englishman?" he muttered. "Has he courage?"

"More courage than you, who keep a girl here against her will!" Zoe panted, looking at him defiantly. "More courage than my poor brother, who stands there like a coward!"

"Shut up, Zoe!" Morrison exclaimed harshly. "There is nothing for you to be furious about or frightened. No one wants to ill treat you. These gentlemen all want to behave kindly to us. It is Laverick they want."

"And you," she cried, "are content to stand by and let him walk into a trap—you let them even use my name to bring him here! Arthur, be a man! Have nothing more to do with them. Help me to get away from this place. Call out. Do something instead of standing there and wasting the precious minutes!"

He came toward her, ugly and threatening.

"I'll do something in a minute," he declared savagely—"something you won't like, either. Keep your mouth shut, I tell you! It's me or him, and, by heaven, he deserves what he'll get!"

Streuss turned away from the window and looked toward Zoe.

"Young lady," he said quietly, "let me beg you not to distress yourself so. I sincerely trust that nothing unpleasant will happen. If it does, I promise you

that we will arrange for your temporary absence. You shall not be disturbed in any way."

"And as regards your brother, have a care, young lady," Lassen growled. "If anyone's in danger, it's he. He'll be lucky if he saves his own skin."

The young man glowered at her. "You hear that, you little fool!" he muttered. "Keep still, can't you?"

Her face was full of defiance. He came nearer to her and changed his tone. "Zoe," he whispered hoarsely, "don't you understand? If they can't get what they want from Laverick, they'll visit it upon me. They're desperate, I tell you. They mean mischief all the time."

"Yet you let him be brought here, your partner, who looked after you when you were ill, and who helped you to go away!" she cried indignantly.

He laughed unpleasantly. "When it comes to a matter of life or death, it's every man for himself. Besides, if I'd known as much about Laverick as I know now, I'm not sure that I should have been so ready to go—not empty-handed, by any manner of means."

"What have you done that you should be so much in the power of these people?" she demanded, fixing her dark eyes upon him searchingly.

The terror whitened his face once more. The perspiration stood out in beads upon his forehead.

"Don't dare to ask me questions!" he exclaimed nervously. "I should like to know what Laverick is to you, eh, that you take so much interest in him? Listen here, my fine young lady. If I've been mug enough to do the dirty work, he hasn't made any bones about taking advantage of it. He's a nice sort of sportsman, I can tell you."

The man at the window suddenly dropped the curtain and spoke across the room to them all.

"He is here," he announced.

"Alone?" Lassen asked thickly.

"Alone," Streuss echoed.

A little thrill seemed to pass through the room. Zoe made no attempt to cry out. Instead, she leaned forward toward the door, as though listening. Her attitude seemed harmless enough. No one

took any more notice of her. They all watched the entrance to the apartment. Zoe remembered the two flights of stairs. She was absorbed in a breathless calculation. Now—now he should be coming quite close. Her whole being was concentrated upon one effort of listening. At last she raised her head. The room resounded with her cries.

"Don't come in! Don't come in here!" she shrieked. "Mr. Laverick, do you hear? Go away! Don't come in here alone!"

Her brother was the first to reach her; his hand went upon her mouth brutally. Her little effort was naturally a failure, defeating, in fact, its own object. Laverick, hearing her cries, simply hastened his coming, threw open the door without waiting to knock, and stepped quickly across the threshold. He saw a man dressed in shabby workman's clothes unshaven, disheveled, holding Zoe in a rough grasp; and with a single well-directed blow he sent him reeling across the room. Then something in the man's cry, a momentary glimpse of his white face, revealed his identity.

"Morrison!" he cried. "Good God, it's Morrison!"

Arthur Morrison was crouching in a corner of the room, his evil face turned upon his aggressor. Laverick took quick stock of his surroundings. There was the tall, fair young man, Adolf Kahn, whom he had seen at the Milan a few hours ago—the man who had unsuccessfully forged his name. There was Lassen, the man who, under pretense of being her manager, had been a spy upon Louise. There was Streuss, with blanched face and hard features, standing with his back to the door. There was Zoe, and, behind, her brother. She held out her hands timidly toward him, and her eyes were soft with pleading.

"I did not want you to come here, Mr. Laverick," she cried softly. "I tried so hard to stop you. It was not I who sent that message."

He took her cold little fingers and raised them to his lips. "I know it, dear," he murmured.

Then a movement in the room warned him, and he was suddenly on guard.

Lassen was close to his side, some evil purpose plainly enough written in his pasty face and unwholesome eyes. Laverick gave him his left shoulder and sent him staggering across the floor. He was angry at having been outwitted and his eyes gleamed ominously.

"Well, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "you seem to have taken unusual pains to secure my presence here! Tell me now, what can I do for you?"

It was Streuss who became spokesman. He addressed Laverick with the consideration of one gentleman addressing another. His voice had many agreeable qualities. His demeanor was entirely amicable.

"Mr. Laverick," he answered, "let us first apologize if we used a little subterfuge to procure for us the pleasure of your visit. We are men who are in earnest, and across whose path you have either willfully or accidentally strayed. An understanding between us has become a necessity."

"Go on," Laverick interrupted. "Tell me exactly who you are and what you want."

"As to who we are," Streuss answered, "does that really matter? I repeat that we are men who are in earnest—let that be enough. As to what we want, it is a certain document to which we have every claim, and which has come into your possession—I flatter you somewhat, Mr. Laverick, if I say by chance."

Laverick shrugged his shoulders. "Let that go," he said. "I know all about the document you refer to, and the notes. They were contained in a pocketbook which, it is perfectly true, has come into my possession. Prove your claim to both and you shall have them."

Streuss smiled. "You will admit that our claim, since we know of its existence," he asked suavely, "is equal to yours?"

"Certainly," Laverick answered; "but then I never had any idea of keeping either the document or the money. That your claim is better than mine is no guarantee that there is not someone else whose title is better still."

Streuss frowned. "Be reasonable, Mr. Laverick," he begged. "We are men of

peace—when peace is possible. The money of which you spoke you can consider as treasure-trove, if you will, but it is our intention to possess ourselves of the document. It is for that reason that we are here in London. I personally am committed to the extent of my life and my honor to its recovery."

A declaration of war, courteously veiled but decisive. Laverick looked around him a little defiantly and shrugged his shoulders.

"You know very well that I do not carry it about with me," he said. "The gentleman on my left," he added, pointing to Kahn, "can tell you where it is kept."

"Quite so," Streuss admitted. "We are not doing you the injustice to suppose that you would be so foolhardy as to trust yourself anywhere with that document upon your person. It is in the safe at the Milan Hotel. I may add that probably, if it had not occurred to you to change your quarters, it would have been in our possession before now. We are hoping to persuade you to return to the hotel with one of our friends here, and procure it."

"As it happens," Laverick remarked, "that is impossible. The man who set the combination for that particular safe has gone off duty, and will not be back again at the hotel till tomorrow morning."

"But he is to be found," Streuss answered easily. "His present whereabouts and his address are known to us. He lives with his family at Harvard Court, Hampstead. We shall assist you in making it worth his while to return to the hotel or to give you the combination word for the safe."

"You are rather great on detail!" Laverick exclaimed.

"It is our business. The question for you to decide, and to decide immediately, is whether you are ready to end this in some respects constrained situation, and give your word to place that document in our hands."

"You are ready to accept my word then?" Laverick asked.

"We have a certain hold upon you," Streuss continued slowly. "Your part-

ner Mr. Morrison's position in connection with the murder in Crooked Friars Alley is, as you may have surmised, a somewhat unfortunate one. Your own I will not allude to. I will simply suggest that for both your sakes publicity—any measure of publicity, in fact, as regards this little affair—would not be desirable."

Laverick hesitated. He understood all that was implied. Morrison's eyes were fixed upon him, the eyes of a craven coward. He felt the intensity of the moment. Then Zoe turned suddenly toward him.

"You are not to give it up!" she cried, with trembling lips. "They cannot hurt you, and it is not true—about Arthur."

Kahn, who was nearest, clapped his hand over her mouth and Laverick knocked him down. Instantly the pacific atmosphere of the room was changed. Lassen and Morrison closed swiftly upon Laverick from different sides. Streuss covered him with the shining barrel of a revolver.

"Mr. Laverick," he said, "we are not here to be trifled with. Keep your sister quiet, Morrison, or, by God, you'll swing!"

Laverick looked at the revolver, fascinated, for an instant, by its unexpected appearance. The face of the man who held it had changed. There was lightning playing about the room.

"It's the dock for you both," Streuss exclaimed fiercely—"for you, Laverick, and you, Morrison, too, if you play with us any longer! One of you's a murderer and the other receives the booty. Who are you to have scruples—criminals, both of you? Your place is in the dock, and you shall be there within twenty-four hours if there are any more evasions. Now, Laverick, will you fetch that document? It is your last chance."

Upon the breathless silence that followed a quiet voice intervened—a voice calm and emotionless, tinged with a measure of polite inquiry. Yet its level utterance fell like a bomb among the little company. The curtain separating this from the inner room had been drawn a few feet back, and Bellamy was standing there, in black overcoat and white

muffler, his silk hat on the back of his head, his left hand, carefully gloved, resting still upon the curtain which he had drawn aside.

"I hope I am not disturbing you at all?" he murmured softly.

For a moment the development of the situation remained uncertain. The gleaming barrel of Streuss's revolver changed its destination. Bellamy glanced at it with the pleased curiosity of a child.

"I really ought not to have intruded," he continued amiably. "I happened to hear the address my friend Laverick gave to the taxicab driver, and I was particularly anxious to have a word or two with him before I left for the Continent."

Streuss was surely something of a charlatan! His revolver had disappeared. The smile upon his lips was both gracious and unembarrassed.

"One is always only too pleased to welcome Mr. Bellamy anywhere, anyhow," he declared. "If apologies are needed at all," he continued, "it is to our friend and host—Mr. Morrison here. Permit me—Mr. Arthur Morrison—the Honorable David Bellamy! These are Mr. Morrison's rooms."

Morrison could do no more than stare. Bellamy, on the contrary, with a little bow came further into the apartment, removing his hat from his head. Lassen glided round behind him, remaining between Bellamy and the heavy curtains. Adolf Kahn moved as though unconsciously in front of the door of the room in which they were.

Bellamy smiled courteously. "I am afraid," he said, "that I must not stay for more than a moment. I have a careful of friends below—we are on our way, in fact, to the Covent Garden Ball—and one or two of them, I fear," he added indulgently, "have already reached that stage of exhilaration which such an entertainment in England seems to demand. They will certainly come and rout me out if I am here much longer. There!" he exclaimed. "You hear that?"

There was the sound of a motor horn from the street below. Streuss, with an oath trembling upon his lips, lifted the blind. There were two motor cars wait-

ing there—large cars with limousine bodies, and apparently full of men. After all, it was to be expected. Bellamy was no fool!

"Since we are to lose you, then, Mr. Laverick," Streuss remarked with a gesture of farewell, "let us say good night. The little matter of business which we were discussing can be concluded with your partner."

Laverick turned toward Zoe. Their eyes met and he read their message of terror.

"You are coming back to your own rooms, Miss Leneveu," he said. "You must let me offer you my escort."

She half rose, but in obedience to a gesture from Streuss Morrison moved near to them.

"If you leave me here, Laverick," he muttered beneath his breath, "if you leave me to these hounds, do you know what they will do? They will hand me over to the police—they have sworn it!"

"Why did you come back?" Laverick asked quickly.

"They stopped me as I was boarding the steamer," Morrison declared. "I tell you they have eyes everywhere. You cannot move without their knowledge. I had to come. Now that I am here, they have told me plainly the price of my freedom. It is that document. Laverick, it is my life! You must give in—you must, indeed! Remember, you're in it, too."

"Am I?" Laverick asked quietly.

"You fool, of course you are!" Morrison whispered hoarsely. "Didn't you come into the entry and take the pocket-book? Heaven knows what possessed you to do it! Heaven knows how you found the pluck to use the money! But you did it, and you are a criminal—a criminal as I am. Don't be a fool, Laverick. Make terms with these people. They want the document—the document—nothing but the document! They will let us keep the money."

"And you?" Laverick asked, turning suddenly to Zoe. "What do you say about all this?"

She looked at him fearlessly.

"I trust you," she said. "I trust you to do what is right."

XXXV

"At last, David!"

Louise welcomed her visitor eagerly with outstretched hands, which Bellamy raised for a moment to his lips. Then she turned toward the third person, who had also risen at the opening of the door—a short, somewhat thick-set man, with swarthy complexion, close-cropped black hair and upturned black mustache.

"You remember Prince Rosmaran?" she said to Bellamy. "He left Serbia only the day before yesterday. He has come to England on a special mission to the King."

Bellamy shook hands.

"I think," he remarked, "I had the honor of meeting you once before, Prince, at the opening of the Servian Parliament two years ago. It was just then, I believe, that you were elected to lead the patriotic party."

The Prince bowed sadly. "My leadership, I fear," he declared, "has brought little good to my unhappy country."

"It is a terrible crisis through which your nation is passing," Bellamy reminded him sympathetically. "At the same time, we must not despair. Austria holds out her clenched hands, but as yet she has not dared to strike."

The face of the Prince was dark with passion. "As yet, no!" he answered. "But how long—how long, I wonder—before the blow falls? We in Serbia have been blamed for arming ourselves, but I tell you that today the Austrian troops are being secretly concentrated on the frontier. Their arsenals are working night and day. Her soldiers are maneuvering almost within sight of Belgrade. We have hoped against hope, yet in our hearts we know that our fate was sealed when the Czar of Russia left Vienna last week."

"Nothing is certain," Bellamy declared restlessly. "England has been ill governed for a great many years, but we are not yet a negligible Power."

Louise leaned a little toward him. "David," she whispered, "the compact!"

He answered her unspoken question. "It is arranged," he said, "finished."

Tomorrow morning at nine o'clock I receive it."

"You are sure?" she begged. "Why need there be any delay?"

"It is locked up in a powerful safe," he explained, "and the clerk who has the combination will not be on duty again till nine. Laverick is there simply waiting for the hour. You were right, Louise, as usual. I should have trusted him from the first."

The Prince had been listening to their conversation with undisguised interest.

"There is a rumor," he said, "that some secret information concerning the compact of Vienna has found its way to this country."

Bellamy smiled. "Hence, I presume, your mission, Prince."

"We three have no secrets from one another," the Prince declared. "Our interests in this matter are absolutely identical. What you suggest, Mr. Bellamy, is the truth. There is a rumor that the Chancellor, in the first few moments of his illness, gave valuable information to someone who is likely to have communicated it to the government here. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. That, I know, is one of your own mottoes. So I am here to know if there is anything to be learned."

Bellamy nodded. "Your arrival is not inopportune, Prince. When did you come?"

"I reached Charing Cross at midnight," the Prince answered. "Our train was an hour late. I am presenting my credentials early this morning, and I am hoping for an interview during the afternoon."

Bellamy considered for a moment. "It is true!" he said. "Among us three there is indeed no need for secrecy. The information you speak of will be in our hands within a few hours. I have no doubt whatever but that your minister will share in it."

"You know of what it consists?" the Prince inquired curiously.

"I think so," Bellamy answered, glancing at the clock. "For my own part, although the information itself is invaluable, I see another and a profounder source of interest in that document. If,

indeed, it is what we believe it to be, it amounts to a *casus belli*."

"You mean that you would provoke war?" Prince Rosmaran asked.

Bellamy shrugged his shoulders. "I," said he—"I am not even a politician. But, you know, the lookers-on see a good deal of the game, and in my opinion there is only one course open for this country—to work upon Russia so that she withdraws from any compact she may have entered into with Austria and Germany, to accept Germany's coöperation with Austria in the despoilment of your country as a *casus belli*, and to declare war at once while our fleet is invincible and our colonies free from danger."

The Prince nodded. "It is good," he admitted, "to hear man's talk once more. Wherever one moves people bow the head before the might of Germany and Austria. Let them alone but a little longer, and they will indeed rule Europe."

Three o'clock struck. The Prince rose. "I go," he announced.

"And I," Bellamy declared. "Come to my rooms at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, Prince, and you shall hear the news."

Bellamy lingered behind. For a moment he held Louise in his arms and gazed sorrowfully into her weary face.

"Is it worth while, I wonder?" he asked bitterly.

"Worth while," she answered, opening her eyes and looking at him, "to feel the mother love? Who can help it who would not be ignoble?"

"But yours, dear," he murmured, "is all grief. Even now I am afraid."

"We can do no more than toil to the end," she said. "David, you are sure this time?"

"I am sure," he replied. "I am going back now to the hotel where Laverick is staying. We are going to sit together and smoke until the morning. Nothing short of an army could storm the hotel. I was with them all only an hour ago—Streuss, that blackguard Lassen, and Adolf Kahn, the police spy. They are beaten men and they know it. They had Laverick—had him by a trick; but I made a dramatic entrance and the game was up."

"Telephone me directly you have taken it safely to Downing Street," she begged.

"I will," he promised.

Bellamy walked from Dover Street to the Strand. The streets were almost brilliant with the cold, hard moonlight. The air seemed curiously keen. Once or twice the fall of his feet upon the pavement was so clear and distinct that he fancied he was being followed and glanced sharply around. He reached the Milan Hotel, however, without adventure, and looked toward the little open space in the hall where he had expected to find Laverick. There was no one there! He stood still for a moment, troubled with a sudden sense of apprehension. The place was deserted except for a couple of sleepy-looking clerks and a small army of cleaners busy with their machines down in the restaurant, moving about like mysterious figures in the dim light.

Bellamy turned back to the hall porter who had admitted him.

"Do you happen to know what has become of the gentleman whom I was with about an hour ago," he asked—"a tall, fair gentleman? Mr. Laverick his name is."

The hall porter recognized Bellamy and touched his hat.

"Why, yes, sir," he answered with a somewhat mysterious air. "Mr. Laverick was sitting over there in an easy chair until about half an hour ago. Then two gentlemen arrived in a taxicab and inquired for him. They talked for a little time, and finally Mr. Laverick went away with them."

Bellamy was puzzled. "Went away with them?" he repeated. "I don't understand that, Reynolds. He was to have waited here till I returned."

The man hesitated. "It didn't strike me, sir," he said, "that Mr. Laverick was very anxious to go. It seemed as though he hadn't much choice about the matter."

Bellamy looked at him keenly. "Tell me, what is in your mind?" he asked.

"Mr. Bellamy, sir," the hall porter replied, "I knew one of those gentlemen by sight. He was a detective from Scotland Yard, and the one who was with him was a policeman in plain clothes."

"Good God!" Bellamy exclaimed. "You think, then—"

"I am afraid there was no doubt about it, sir," the man answered. "Mr. Laverick was arrested on some charge or other."

Into New Oxford Street, one of the ceaseless streams of polyglot humanity, came Zoe from her cheerless day bound for the theater. She was a little whiter, a little more tired than usual. All day long she had heard nothing of Laverick. All day long she had sat in her tiny room with the memory of that horrible night before her. She had tried in vain to sleep; she had made no effort whatever to eat. She knew now why Arthur Morrison had run away. She knew the cause of that paroxysm of fear in which he had sought her out. The horror of the whole thing had crept into her blood like poison. Life was once more a dreary, profitless struggle. All the wonderful dreams, which had made existence seem almost like a fairy tale for this last week, had faded away. She was once more a mournful little waif among the pitiless crowds.

She turned to the left and past the Holborn Tube. Boys were shouting everywhere the contents of the evening papers. Nearly everyone seemed to be carrying one of the pink sheets. She herself passed on with unseeing eyes. News was nothing to her. Governments might rise and fall; war might come and go—she had still life to support, a friendless little life, too, on two pounds fifteen shillings a week. The news they shouted fell upon deaf ears, but one boy unfurled almost before her eyes the headlines of his sheet.

SENSATIONAL ARREST OF A WELL
KNOWN STOCKBROKER. CHARGE
OF MURDER.

(To be continued.)

DRAMA AND LADYFINGERS

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

THE most unladylike thing about the drama of our day is the lady playwright. The nicest, sweetest, innocentest woman in the world, setting herself down to dramatic writing, forthwith resolves herself into something of a mental cross between a Paul Potter and a maternity hospital. After giving husband a nickel to go out and buy himself a hot chocolate, and pulling down the blinds so the neighbors can't see, the respectable little homebody at once grabs hold of her pen and proceeds to get "strong." Strength, in the theme mind of a lady dramatist, is defined alone as that which results from feminine weakness. In which category come such joyous items as illegitimate children and other presents that fall to the lot of ladies with "pasts." Lady playwrights hold no sister immoral. The poor creatures are just "weak." And the ladies' plays are as full of weak sisters as East Aurora. A *bad* woman in a woman's play? *Non!* A *fallen* woman in a woman's play? *Non, non!* It is either a "weak" female or a "misled" one. And man is the eternal Patsy Bolivar. If a woman falls, the charge is upon his head; if she stubs her moral toe, even, his the flagstone on which rests the blame.

Inasmuch as this is a dramatic department and not a section in a church paper, it would be manifestly improper for me to go into a general discussion here of the logic of the she-playwrights' jiu-jitsus with the sex business. That they merely snuggle with their themes, however, instead of taking them out into a far corner of the conservatory and, man fashion, getting down to brass tacks, is another matter—and one for our immediate and relevant concern. Some

day doubtless a woman dramatist is coming along, no mere "picturesque protest against common sense" as is her co-laboring cult of our present hearthstone; and some day doubtless such a woman is going to realize that all the force in this dramatic "weak woman" farce is evaporated, that there is no strength in secondhand sentimentality, that the fall of a woman—as the late David Graham Phillips revealed the case in his truly mighty, though crudely done, play produced a handful of years ago at the old Madison Square Theater—is *her* fault and hers alone. Ostracism, the granite gaze that meets her as her friendly head inclines in passing, the slammed door, the one vile oath—they shadow her footsteps on the ways of the world. It may be wrong (and I am not sure it isn't) but it is so! And being so, all the slobbering lady playwrights cannot make it otherwise acceptably. Granting even man's share in the wretched business, the fall of woman remains the relentless declension of the Tenderloin: Git her! Glitter!! Got her!!! Gutter!!!! Sentiment may go before a fall, but assuredly it does not go after. Pity then, maybe—but nothing of sentiment, unless it be schoolgirl. Zoe Blundell, Laura Murdock, Felicia Hindemarsch, Iris Bellamy—none of these was born of woman's pen, and they, of the erring dramatic sisterhood, are far up among our modern classics. They and their stories surrender themselves not to the doily dramatists. Some day, though, there will come a woman playwright enfranchised from sachet sentimentality who will handle the simple problem of the slipped sister sanely, courageously and successfully. Some day doubtless

such a woman will come, and, unless I am extraordinarily in error, that woman will *not* be she who signs herself "George Paston."

"George Paston" (Miss E. M. Symonds), an English lady of letters and dramatic postcards, is the author of "NOBODY'S DAUGHTER," produced recently at the New Theater. Via the program, we are graciously informed that "'Nobody's Daughter' has been called 'a comedy with a purpose,' but it is first of all a comedy and a life study and the 'purpose,' forms an integral part of the play." The program—gabby piece!—also informs us that the *London Mail* said of the play when it was first presented in the British theaters: "It is a long time since anything so easy and natural as this brilliant study of home life has been realized upon the stage." The "home life" referred to consists in the discovery by a man that his wife has been the mistress of his best friend and that the young girl who is visiting in his house is in reality her illegitimate offspring. The "life study" referred to is a surface exposition of the manner in which lady playwrights suppose such personages ought to act under the circumstances. The "purpose" referred to is—heaven alone knows what! As a play with a purpose, "NOBODY'S DAUGHTER" is about as logical and convincing as a speech by Theodore Roosevelt. But permit me to escort you into the lady playwright's confidence. When the wife is charged with being the mother of the child and is reminded of her sin, she calmly rejoins: "It was no sin; it just was a mistake." Can you beat it? I ask you, can you beat it? With a start like that, with every ounce of sympathy for the wretched, calculating drab of a wife gone at the very outset, and with belated "mother love" and "husband antagonism" developing in the stretch and finishing nowhere, what chance does "purpose" stand? Only one major character, Mrs. Torrens, wife of the illegitimate girl's father, has been drawn with any direct appeal to the cool mind. The rest are of silk and sawdust, mere ink-emotional scarecrows. A futile play it is, though blessed with beautiful staging

and acting on a par with that disclosed in "The Concert." Just why the New Theater's stock company rights had to be violated once again by the introduction of another foreign player for the leading role when one of its own members, Miss Olive Wyndham, proves herself in this very presentation to be precisely the actress for the part, is another in the endless chain of questions that has emanated from the Central Park West regions.

Whenever Mr. Edward Sheldon has a new play produced, a lot of day coach souls gather in the market place to protest that he is young. They all liked his "Salvation Nell"—but, ah, he was young! They liked "The Nigger"—but, dear me, he was *so* young! They like his latest play—but oh, my, he is *so very* young! Even many of the dramatic critics resolve themselves into Madame Yales when they review a Sheldon drama. The phrase, "a pink-cheeked boy," has come to be as much a part of the reviews as the plot of the play. If Mr. Sheldon had a gray beard and wore rubbers he might be permitted to have his good plays produced in peace, but, being a criminal in the matter of youth, he must needs suffer a condescending description of his otherwise perfectly all-right face every time he sees his name in print. The facts that Preston Gibson happens to be a millionaire, that Joseph Medill Patterson, another playwright, happens to occupy some social standing in Chicago, or that Mr. Sheldon has not yet arrived at the age where he eats apples before going to bed, curiously enough have never seemed to me to be essential to my mental equipment for the criticizing of the plays these men have written. Mr. Sheldon's youth does not excuse him, to my mind, for having built so interesting a piece of dramatic machinery as "THE BOSS," his latest effort. If youth is a crime, then one of the most interesting plays of the season is a double crime. "THE BOSS" while thoroughly attention-riveting, is nevertheless by no means as skin-cutting, as penetrating a work as were Sheldon's two previous efforts. It is wholly a thing of the spotlight and foot-

lights; it is entirely stagey, entirely a "show." And yet, in spite of this—or maybe because of it—"THE BOSS" never lets go its hold on you from the first curtain to the last. We have here the story of a sort of bullying "Fingy" Conners of a lake port town who compels a girl to marry him if she would save her father from ruin, of the conflict between the carefully bred woman of the drawing-room and the rye-bred man of the cheap saloons, of the man's crushing business power and the dissipation of that power, and of the final complete give-in of the wife who has come to love him in his desolation. Holbrook Blinn gives another of his fine characterizations in the role of Regan the boss, but Miss Emily Stevens, who is apparently content to rest her art in elsiejanising her distinguished aunt, Mrs. Fiske, is a decided disappointment. Mr. William A. Brady has staged the play in commendable fashion.

When the first curtain went up on Rupert Hughes's latest baby, "EXCUSE ME," presented by Henry W. Savage at the Gaiety, and we beheld the interior of a Pullman on an Overland Limited speeding westward from Chicago, we perceived immediately that here was a scene as full of promise as a gubernatorial candidate before election. And when we read down the program and saw that the second and third acts as well were laid on the train, we realized that if Mr. Hughes could not edit a bright, brisk entertainment with this fresh, fertile idea as a starter, it most assuredly would not be the fault of the idea. What is more human than an upper berth? What more romantic than an as yet unopened window? What more companionable than being lurching like a swift inshoot into the lap of the fat girl across the aisle? The echoes answer: "Nothing!" The manner in which the playwright has gone about his dramatization of a Pullman car may be best suggested by the cast of passengers he has chosen. These may be catalogued as follows: an engaged couple who want to get married but can't find a minister, a minister who is taking a vacation incognito, a sentimental souse, a few highwaymen, a

card sharp, a pet poodle, a missionary, an insistent book butcher, a couple of smoking room anecdote slingers, things on their way to Reno, plain travelers, a divorce lawyer and—the usual ubiquitous Ethiopian whiskbroom and growly conductor. The method of procedure consists in sending the car around a series of sharp curves and piling these personages in a corner on top of one another. There is no attempt to weave a definite story. That many of the resultant incidents are provocative of laughter the deepest grouch cannot deny. That many of the truly humorous episodes in plush travel have eluded Mr. Hughes, the deepest grouch also cannot deny. In the hands of George Ade, for instance, the Pullman theme might have been made a joy forever. In the hands of Hughes it becomes a joy only when it goes around the sudden turns in the road.

The novelty of the farce, however—it is the most novel thing of its kind in town at this writing—should insure it a considerable vogue. John Findlay as the minister masquerading in a red necktie, James Lackaye as the sobby drunk, Willis Sweatmen as the porter, Miss Grace Fisher as the missionary, and Miss Lottie Alter as the red necktie's wife are the best in a generally capable cast. Mr. Findlay's third act smoking room maneuvers with a big black cigar provide a beautiful bit of facial comedy.

The advent of "THE ZEBRA," adapted by Paul Potter from the French play of the same name by Nancey and Armont, was indeed welcome. Had Charles Frohman searched the Continent from Copenhagen to Gibraltar, he could not have discovered a farce that would have filled its purpose more acceptably. "THE ZEBRA" was the best thing of the sort available—for giving Americans an opportunity for realizing, through comparison, how infinitely superior their own native made, clean, light entertainments are to the antiquated, suggestive mud pies manufactured abroad. "THE ZEBRA," as disclosed to American audiences, is like every other French farce ever written. Its story is the same old

one of the two regulation faithless husbands. You know how it goes: Act I. "Where are you going, mon cher Honree?" "Helas, ma chère Yvette, I must go away for the night to get the contract for digging the new sewers in the Rue de l'Opéra." Act II. "I believe my husband is deceiving me, Heloise." "Oui, madame, I think so." "Come, Heloise, get my cloak. I shall go to the Bal Tabarin disguised as a filet mignon and catch him." Act III. "I believe my wife suspects me, Robaire." "Non, non, mon ami Honree, it cannot be! But as your friend I will help you out of the dilemma." Act IV. "Honree, I know now that you have not been loyal to me." "But, ma chère Yvette, I have purchased you this beautiful necklace and I promise to dig sewers no more." Embrace and curtain!

In "THE ZEBRA" Honree says he is going up in a balloon (from which the play derives its title) instead of giving the sewer contract excuse. Otherwise everything transpires according to the established code of 1840. The Potter "adaptation" is a slovenly piece of work. The *locale* is set down as New London, Conn., while the four women characters are left to retain such typical American names as Bulbul, Ottima, Kiki and Blenda. A preliminary glance at the program made me doubtful as to whether they represented cigarettes or dogs. The adaptation and its staging are as devoid of atmosphere as the Subway, and Mr. Potter has offended further by the inclusion in his work of sporadic splotches of smut, the nature of one of which must cause a silent shudder in the dainty actress who is called upon to give utterance to it. In brief, the Potter "adaptation" consists chiefly in frequent interpolations of references to Shanley's, Churchill's and Forty-second Street and in vaudevilling across the footlights such segments of the dialogue as deal with bedchamber episodes. In the part of Kiki, a gay little shopgirl, Miss Irene Fenwick lends the presentation its one interesting touch.

There are just two things that keep "THE BALKAN PRINCESS" from taking rank with "The Spring Maid" as one of the best musical plays in town. One

is Percy Ames and the other is Teddy Webb. These dolorous souls engage themselves in being what is known in theatrical vernacular as "comedians." They are very, very bad. Eliminate them and you have as thoroughly melodious, as magnificently caparisoned and well evolved a romantic tune play as New York has seen in several seasons. Infused with blood rushing, compelling life by the personal muscle of the adaptable Mr. William A. Brady; shot with the warm, gay colorings of Ellis costuming that make all the other music show costumes on the New York stage at present look like side street Sunday bests; and sung with thorough attractiveness by Miss Louise Gunning, "THE BALKAN PRINCESS" gets my otherwise cordial approval. Herbert Cortell, as a waiter in a restaurant who tells all the patrons "there is a little place across the way where you can get something good to eat"; Robert Warwick, as the final curtain hugger; and Miss Alice Brady and Miss Vida Whitmore, as a maid of honor and maid without much on her respectively, figure prominently in the cast. The two "comedians" referred to appear on the stage at these intervals: 8:45, 9:20, 9:48, 10:25 and 10:40 P.M. I have prepared this table for you so that you may take it with you when you go to see the play and employ the periods specified either to snatch a little snooze or to read our this month's interesting novelette.

The New Theater's production of Josephine Preston Peabody's blank verse Stratford prize play, "THE PIPER," founded on the old legend of the Hamelin rat lorelei, disclosed the powers of the playhouse at their best and fullest. The scenic investiture, showing the gloomy market place in Hamelin, with its great, gaunt cathedral, its crowded-together houses and its dark gate leading to the sun-tinted open road; the Crossways, with its long, narrow lanes of green trees, grassy hills and cool gray-green valleys; and the Hollow Hill with the brilliant sun pouring in through the vines above, was perfect in its beauty—and I am always one of the first to smile my skeptical reluctance when the word "perfect"

tries to work its way out of my vocabulary onto the printed critical page. The production and acting, as supplied the text by the New Theater, were immeasurably superior to the text itself. Save in a few instances, small imagination and a vague, slender conception of the breath of poesy permeate the play. The author's weakness may be observed clearly through the manner in which she harps greedily on an apt word or phrase once she has achieved it. "A little shipwrecked star," she calls the little crippled boy Jan, and then, just as the delicate feeling of the gracious phrase is stealing into the heart, she hurls it straight back at one's head again.

The play tells how the folk of Hame-lin withheld the promised reward from the piper after he had rid the village of its plague of rats; how the piper lured away all the children in a spirit of revenge; and how, through the light of mother love that was revealed to him in the eyes of the mother of the little cripple, he was finally prevailed upon to return the youngsters to their homes. The return of the children is one of the most truly delightful things you can picture. The silent, cold gray market place is crowded with the sorrowing mothers and fathers whose youngsters have been taken away. The piper promises them that he will bring the children back. They doubt him, but a faint hope comes into their features. The piper begins to play. Through the gate you see the grim valley road grow gradually lighter. Suddenly, miles away, it seems, you hear a soft, hushed patter as of a million little feet. The pattering grows louder and the buzz of children's voices becomes bigger and nearer. Now you can hear the returning youngsters shouting and singing, and the hurrying footfalls begin to sound like hail upon the roof tops. The faces of the assembled men and women light up—and then—a great yell—and hundreds of happy, garlanded kidlets come bursting through the great gate into the market place and into their aching, longing, hugging parents' arms. It is a scene that reaches out and grabs your heart—and makes you sorry you are a bachelor. The

acting is splendid. Miss Edith Wynne Matthison heads the company in the role of the lurer. All in all, "THE PIPER" is one of the New Theater's most praiseworthy efforts.

In Memoriam

"OUR WORLD," ninety-second child of Walter Hackett. Born Garrick Theater, February sixth, at twenty minutes after eight o'clock. Died Garrick Theater, February sixth, at quarter of eleven. "The bad die young."

We were standing in the lobby of the Criterion Theater, my friend the Chronic Faultfinder and I. It was between the first and second acts of Henri Lavedan's comedy "SIRE," produced by Charles Frohman with Otis Skinner in the leading role. Presently the man at the door nodded his head to us, signifying that the curtain was about to go up. The Chronic Faultfinder started into the theater. "Come," said he; "the intermission has begun!" While "SIRE" was indeed tenuous to a T, and while in comparison with its four acts its three entr'actes did seem somewhat more prolific both in action and scintillant dialogue, I could not bring myself to coincide entirely with the Chronic Faultfinder in his supplementary whisper: "This play is the lightest thing on the Great White Way." I remarked to my friend that obviously he had not seen "Suzanne," a wafer beside which even "SIRE" seemed pumpernickel.

Lavedan's play, the action of which transpires in Paris during the Revolution of 1848, has to do with a Mademoiselle de Saint-Salbi, an elderly person whose mind has become harrythawed from harping on the subject of the Lost Dauphin, who in her belief is still alive and waiting around the corner ready to pop up at any moment and claim the throne. In order to set the lady more at her ease, an ever present Abbé and the family physician introduce to her Denis Roulette, a cheap actor, who, they assure her, is none other than the missing heir. In the fourth act the old lady discovers the deception that has been

practised upon her, and Roulette, repentant, tells her he will go down into the shot-filled thoroughfare and earn her good will by puncturing any enemies of the King who are bent on raising hell. Whether or not the good lady's reason is thus restored the playwright vouchsafes not. The play itself is second in importance at all stages of the game to Mr. Skinner, an actor who is amply sufficient unto himself to enthrall an audience for three hours. Personally I would rather see Skinner in a bad play than some other "stars" I know of in good plays. His clean enunciation and suave smile and eyebrow, his swaggering saunter and pervading air of nice intelligence—a rare thing on the stage—his mastery of craft and unrougey method never fail to send me out of the theater in which he is playing his warm admirer and critic press agent. There are some who charge this actor with grave artistic deficiencies, but if such latter exist they have eluded my eye. Mr. Skinner represents, in this humble estimation, the truest and most proficient type of romantic player on our present stage, a "star" in every honest sense of the word, a *real* actor. Let us pray that some day he will stumble on a play worthy of his talents.

Barrie's one-act comedy, "THE TWELVE-POUND LOOK," performed by Miss Ethel Barrymore in conjunction with her recent revival of "Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire," turned out to be one of the supreme delights of the season. Here is a work of art in the best manner of the so-called "funny little man of literature." Sticking the sharp point of his pen into the clay feet of the universally worshiped idol Success, Barrie shows you the case of a vain, success-smeared Sir Harry Sims, who in climbing up to fame and fortune has lost sympathy, soul and head. His first wife, unable to endure "his fat dinners, his fat friends and the fat jewelry" with which he surrounded her, waited until she got hold of twelve pounds, bought herself a typewriter—and left him. He has married a second time. In response to a call for a typist, his first wife shows up on the scene. He asks her why she deserted him. "Because

of your success," she replies. "You don't mean that you left because of that!" Sims exclaims. "Yes; how I hated it!" she says. "If you had only failed sometimes! Failure is so human." Sims's first wife looks at him half in pity, half in contempt. "If I were a husband," she assures him as she leaves, "I would watch my wife carefully to see that the twelve-pound look never came into her eyes." The second Mrs. Sims enters. Her face reveals the lines that come from hard living in the same house with Success. "I wonder," she says to her lord and master, "I wonder if they are very expensive?" Sims starts. "What?" he asks. "Those machines," she replies quietly. "THE TWELVE-POUND LOOK" is a beautifully tailored bit of drama, superbly presented by Miss Barrymore, Mrs. Sam Sothern and Charles Dalton.

"Hallo; is this Glen McDonough? . . . Yes, this is Lew Fields. Say, Glen, if you've got an hour to spare I wish you'd write me a new show. I want to put it on as soon as possible. Make the first act take place on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, the second in Times Square at night and the third in a shoe store. You'll have the manuscript to me in the morning? . . . Thanks. Good-bye."

Unless we are resting under an enormous hallucination, all the famous Fields Broadway Theater musical shows are born upon some such method of procedure. They stick to the same lines as closely as street cars, but like street cars they usually "get there." This season's scene-woman-and-song fest is called "THE HEN PECKS." The Hen Pecks are a family of rubes who come down to New York from the old farm, lead the cocktail-headache life of the city for a while and then re-farm. Among the novel scenes displayed are the interior of a barber shop, with its long row of chairs, mirrors, manicures, bootblacks, brush nuisances and tonsorial Neroes; a farmyard with live pigs, dogs, cats, ducks, roosters, hens and squabs, the latter in silk stockings; and a view of Forty-second Street at the theater rush hour.

THE MEREDITH OF TOMORROW

By H. L. MENCKEN

THERE is no need at this late date to make formal confession that Herbert George Wells is a first rate novelist. He wrung that acknowledgment from the world after a sharp tussle two years or more ago, when his "Tono-Bungay" came from the press. The Wells of the fantastic tales preceding—of "The Time Machine," "The War of the Worlds," *u.s.w.*—had been an enormously clever fellow—but clever fellows are not scarce enough, even in England, to be revered. But the Wells of "Tono-Bungay" was something rarer and more noteworthy: a new and realistic Wells, who had put time machines and other such fripperies behind him; an alert and sapient observer of the human comedy; a ruthless explorer of impulse and motive; a philosopher with a firm grip upon the facts of life; a humorist of deep, Rabelaisian, sub-diaphragmic laughter; a psychologist whose thinking was swift, accurate and his very own—in short, a true novelist, a reporter plus interpreter, a literary artist. "Tono-Bungay," for all its concessions to the old Wells and his following, was easily the first book of its season, and yet that season was far from a sterile one, for it also brought forth "Fraternity," "The Point of Honor" and "The Power of a Lie."

In "Ann Veronica," which followed, the humorist yielded in large part to the man of science. We had here an acute and relentless study of the latter day Englishwoman—that artificial, half-educated, half-emancipated, unhappy creature whose American sister was set before us so vividly by David Graham Phillips in "The Hungry Heart." Mr. Phillips's novel, as we all

know, was the very best work that he was destined ever to give us, but Mr. Wells's, I am convinced, was even better. One must search many novels, indeed, to find chapters more penetrating than those which describe Ann Veronica's adventures in militant suffragette—her feminine revolt against the mental and sartorial dowdiness of the shrieking sisters, her startling discovery of sex, her swift yielding to the fore-ordained man. The book came so soon after "Tono-Bungay" that it had to share attention and so it lost much of its effect. But when the time comes to estimate Mr. Wells's work calmly it will be agreed, I think, that he was even nearer reality when he created Ann Veronica Stanley than when he created the prodigious Ponderevo.

"The History of Mr. Polly" followed—a tragedy of the ludicrous. And now after an interval of almost a year comes "THE NEW MACHIAVELLI" (*Duffield*, \$1.35), a novel which exceeds all three of its predecessors, both in plan and in execution. Externally, "THE NEW MACHIAVELLI" is the story of a rising young English politician who throws away all his chances in life to go chasing after a woman, but that story is really little more than a text from which the author preaches copiously and eloquently and with unflinching wit, plausibility and logic. The thing actually under consideration is political idealism, its causes, nature and impediments. Is this world that we live in the best world imaginable? Certainly it is not. Every one of us has summoned up a picture at some time or other of a better world, and many of us try vainly to make that better world a reality. Why do we al-

ways fail? Why does failure lie ambushed in every scheme for the betterment of man? Why are Socialism and all other such programs of amelioration essentially and incurably impracticable? Because, as the psalmist hath it, man is vile. Because the individual, try as he may, can never quite subordinate himself to the race. Because a barbarian lurks beneath every plug hat and behind every diamond stomacher. Because appetites play hob with states of mind and passions gobble ideals. Because, in brief, man eternally runs amuck.

Mr. Wells's hero is Richard Remington, a young Englishman of respectable but far from distinguished parentage. His father, an inefficient schoolmaster, dies early and he is brought through his 'teens by a pious mother to whom he is ever a mystery and often a most alarming one. At the City Merchants' School the Latin tongue is rammed into him and he is taught to revere cricket, mutton and the British Constitution. Then he goes up to Cambridge, and there he is whirled about in a maelstrom of new ideas. He hears a hundred eager youngsters discussing government, learning, sex, raiment, art, theology and the destiny of man. Occasionally an older sage drops a word or two; Remington himself learns to take a hand. He emerges from the tumult a fledgling politician of socialistic leanings, with a great yearning to lift his fellow men out of their wallow, to get some order into the muddle of life, to substitute some great man-made plan for the struggle for existence.

Why all this waste of muscle and mind, matter and energy? Why this endless round of building up and tearing down; this formless, aimless, useless striving; this ferocious conflict over non-essentials; this vain cannibalism of the street, the market, the church, the university and the parliament house? Why not set men to helping one another instead of letting them go on consuming one another? Why not get that same orderly system into life which is visible in the revolutions of the wheels of a clock? Why not choose some definite

goal and work toward it in an intelligent fashion, with due regard for short cuts, hills and obstacles in the way? Why can't men be brought to see the stupendous value of discipline, combination, organization, economy of effort?

Remington tries to make them see it, and the second and third sections of the chronicle are devoted to the story of his failure. Beginning as a Liberal with socialistic sympathies, he is gradually forced out of the party. The trouble is that there is no such thing. What he took to be a large and compact party, with a well defined plan for the amelioration of human woes, is really a wild mob of individuals, no two of whom agree upon anything. Remington goes over to the Unionists—and finds the same confusion in that camp, too. Then he sets up what is practically a party of his own, and for a while it prospers greatly. Ardent young men flock to his standard; he arrests the attention of the House of Commons; his writings and exhortations make him a power in the nation; it grows plain to everyone that he is a coming man, that he will one day make and unmake laws.

But alas and alack, this superman at bottom is exactly like the common men about him! The heat of his ideas has carried him so far—but suddenly that glow pales into phosphorescence beside the white flame of passion. The apostle of discipline, of order, of fixed intentions, goes roaring down the highway, a rebel against all the laws! In brief, Remington bolts to the Continent with the fascinating Isabel Rivers, leaving his lawful wife to the divorce courts and yellow journals. At one stroke the great structure that he has built up goes to pieces. That incurable deviltry, that innate savagery, that wild disregard for discipline which he has sought to throttle in his fellow men takes its revenge by throttling *him*. His suicide is magnificent, but like Parnell's it is without curtain calls. Richard Remington, once so puissant a fellow, is now merely an Englishman sojourning on the Gulf of Liguria—a somewhat dubious Englishman, be it said, with a more dubious companion and a still more dubious

child. Politically and socially he has ceased to exist.

Thus the story, in crude outline. In detail it is a thing of rare and surpassing merits, a supremely excellent piece of writing, one of the best novels of our day. Mr. Wells is constantly enriching his English. The gipsy phrase creeps into it. It is full of delicate half-tones, color, music. And as his merely technical skill as a writer increases, he seems to get a firmer grip upon his ideas. The most engrossing pages in "THE NEW MACHIAVELLI" are the pages of earnest argument! I state it as a sober fact. What other living English novelist has so much to say that is worth saying and can say it so well? Conrad, Hardy and Moore perhaps—but who else? With these three Wells must do battle for the laurel of Meredith—and youth is on his side. If he keeps on as he has started, the world in ten years may choose to forget that he once wrote thrillers in the manner of Jules Verne, just as it has chosen to forget that Richard Wagner once wrote romanzas for cornet-a-piston.

"Trashy" is the adjective which best describes "THE ROOT OF EVIL," by the Rev. Thomas Dixon (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50). The copy before me is adorned with a full page portrait of the author, and across that portrait and in facsimile of his handwriting is the legend: "Has the woman who turns from a great love to marry for money a soul?" At first glance this seems to be a novel and startling question, but a second look at it reveals the fact that it is not a question at all, but merely a high sounding and unintelligible procession of empty words. The tale which follows is the same sort of piffle. It is crowded with incident and heavy with pronouncements upon the great problems of human existence, but it quickly appears that not many of the things done by the characters are plausible, and that not many of the thoughts so laboriously set forth are either new or informing. The story deals specifically with the adventures of James Stuart, a young Carolinian jackass who goes to New York in pursuit of Nan Primrose, a beautiful

daughter of his own State. But Nan is out for the cash, and so she jilts James to marry John C. Calhoun Bivens, a loathsome millionaire. John is entirely without blood or breeding. Not one of his uncles was on the staff of Gen. Robert E. Lee. Search the South from Alexandria to New Orleans and you will never find his old mammy, for the good and sufficient reason that his folk were poor whites and had no chattels. He is, in brief, a brother to the ox, and Nan in the end finds him impossible. So she poisons him and sends for James. But James by this time has gained a bit of that common sense which even Southerners, for all their childish romanticism, gather in New York. Instead, then, of clasping Nan to his bosom, he gives her the cold shoulder, and soon afterward we find him the husband of Harriet Woodman, a famous singer, and the father of an infant of indeterminate age and sex. James gets ahead in New York and is elected to office, but he speaks North Carolinian to the end. "Your father *don't* take boarders"—"This thing *don't* go with me"—such are his artless mutilations of the English language. In another place one of the minor characters says: "The man who fights for the right can't lose." "Unless *they* fight trusts," observes James sapiently. Of such stuff are best sellers made!

"ONE WAY OUT," by William Carleton (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.20), purports to be the autobiography of a native born American who emigrates to America. At the start we see him struggling along miserably on a clerk's wages. He is a good clerk, it appears, but clerking is a bad, bad trade. One day he loses his job—and in a month he is face to face with starvation. What to do? An idea seizes him. Why not imitate the immigrants who find hope and opportunity on our shores? Here come coarse, brutish fellows from Southeastern Europe, utterly ignorant of English and but half removed from barbarians—and yet there is work for them among us and a chance to improve their lot. Why not join them? Certainly an intelligent American should be able to do as well as they. So our busted ex-clerk goes into the ditches

and hires a room in a tenement to house his wife and child—and thereafter we see him climbing up the ladder. He masters ditching and becomes a gang boss; then he bosses whole jobs; then he sets up a contracting business of his own. He has learned a useful trade; he can do one thing well; he prospers; his happy thought has saved him.

"William Carleton" is a mask for some very skillful contriver of tales. This one is told with amazing plausibility. It bears from end to end an air of almost literal truth. Reading it, one catches oneself believing it as if it were the history of a real man. In only one place indeed is there any stretching of the probabilities, but that unfortunately is in a place of critical importance, to wit, the place where the clerk makes his plan. It is difficult to imagine any natural born clerk achieving so large a feat of ratiocination. True thinking is impossible to the clerkly mind. A clerk can feel and hope and yearn but he cannot think. He has a civilized man's capacity for suffering without a civilized man's capacity for doing. That, in brief, is his tragedy.

"SIDNEY CARTERET, RANCHER" (*Stokes*, \$1.50) is another of Harold Bindloss's tales of amateur agriculture and ardent amour in the Canadian Northwest. Mr. Bindloss writes these tales with considerable fluency and skill. They are suave, they have movement and color, and their characters are interesting and plausible. But the thought will not down that they would be even better done if the author gave a bit more time to the doing of them. As it is, they succeed one another almost as rapidly as the images on a moving picture screen. Too much haste is also visible in most of the short stories which make up the volume entitled "WHEN GOD LAUGHS," by Jack London (*Macmillan*, \$1.50). Here we have good ideas spoiled by an overspeedy typewriter. "Semper Idem," as it is printed, is a mere anecdote, and "Make Westing" is a rough sketch and nothing more. (What a masterpiece Joseph Conrad would have made of it!) The best story in the book is "The Chinago," a study of Chinese sto-

icism in the face of death. Next comes "Just Meat," a tale of two burglars. They make a rich haul, and each, yearning to cabbage the whole of it, gives the other poison. Then they die horribly, face to face. No doubt some Strindberg of the vaudeville has already stolen the idea! Mr. London seems to oscillate between achievement and failure—perhaps because his output is double his capacity. His "Martin Eden" was unspeakably bad, but the book of Alaskan short stories following it was crowded with good things. Then came "Revolution," a volume of preposterous balderdash, and after it "Burning Daylight," the best novel he has ever done. "WHEN GOD LAUGHS" strikes bottom once more. Let us wait in patience for his next book, which, by his private law of compensation, should be a good one.

Of lesser novels, there is, as usual, a copious outpouring. Easily the best of them all is "THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA," by Gaston Leroux, that clever and industrious Frenchman (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50). M. Leroux has borrowed—and put to excellent use—a trick invented by De Foe. That is to say, he tells his fantastic and creepy story with a great assumption of seriousness, using real names and real dates whenever possible and setting down "corroborative facts" in solemn footnotes. In his prologue he gravely thanks M. Messenger, director of the Paris Opera, for "kind assistance," and from end to end he retains the air of the painstaking and even pedantic historian. As for the tale itself, it is a thriller which porcupines the hair and bulges the eye. If such things must be manufactured let us be thankful that a man so skillful and ingenious as M. Leroux is at the labor of manufacturing them. Several double page illustrations in full color by André Castaigne are given with the book as *lagniappe*. The name of the translator appears not.

Finally, come "FOUR IN FAMILY," by Florida Pope Sumerwell (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.25), a story of family ructions and young love, told from the standpoint of Bosco, an intelligent bull terrier, and showing a fresh and lively humor;

"THE GOLDEN WEB," by Anthony Partridge (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), in which the business piracies and amorous adventures of a mining millionaire keep us awake pleasantly for two hours and twenty minutes; "THE IMPRUDENCE OF PRUE," by Sophie Fisher (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), a romance of good Queen Anne's day, with a heroine who commits the unpardonable indiscretion of marrying an outlaw; "PLAYING THE GAME," by Rita Weiman (*Cupples-Leon*, \$1.50), a bright, clever story of a society girl's revolt against the shams of her narrow world; and "COL. TODHUNTER OF MISSOURI," by Ripley D. Saunders (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), a tale of love and politics in the back reaches of the incredulous State, with the full length figure of Col. Thurston T. Todhunter, politician, philanthropist and philosopher, in the foreground.

In "THE MIRACLE OF RIGHT THOUGHT," by Orison Swett Marden, B.S., B.O., A.M., LL.B., M.D. (*Crowell*, \$1.10), we wallow in the New Thought, that compound of credulous faith and incredible denial. The whole universe, it appears, is controlled by Mind. Decide what you want and will it hard enough, and you will infallibly get it, whether it be a large bank account, a political job, the royalties that some publisher owes you or a wife with tepid feet. The human Body, being material, is a mere function of the Mind. "The more intelligent physicians are beginning to see that the healing of the body is brought about by connecting the patient with the great life storage batteries, with the very Source of Life, the life principle itself. The future physician will be a man trained to help the sufferer find his God, his good. He will need no other remedy." Prof. Dr. Paul Ehrlich, it is plain, is an ignoramus, for he has never heard of this storage battery. Instead, he gravely doses his patients with arsenic. What an ass he is! And what hunkorous donkeys *they* are for getting well!

So much for New Thought pathology and therapeutics. On the theological side it is equally astonishing. Dr. Marden, for example, is privy to all the dark secrets of the universe. He knows ex-

actly why human beings were put into the world and what they are expected to do here. Their chief duty, it appears, is to think right, for out of right thinking will come universal prosperity and happiness. "No one," says the Doctor, "was meant to live in poverty and wretchedness. The lack of anything that is desirable is not natural to the constitution of any human being." In brief, the law of the survival of the fittest is now formally repealed. The struggle for existence is a mere chimera. Adam Smith was an imbecile, Malthus a clown, Darwin a numskull. Let us sing a hymn and disperse to our luxurious homes!

Windy and harmless nonsense, true enough, but did you ever stop to think that thousands of Americans take it seriously? According to the publishers, 21,000 copies of one of Dr. Marden's earlier books have been sold. And other such books pour from the presses in a ceaseless stream. The rise and progress of the New Thought is one of the marvels of the day. It constitutes a sort of grand lodge, to which Christian Science, Anti-Vaccination, Psychic Research, the Emmanuel Movement and all other such fantastic things bear the relation of subordinate lodges. It has room for every pale young curate who hears angelic voices when his liver is out of order, for every spavined old maid who mourns over slaughtered guinea pigs, for every bumptious fellow who thinks he knows more about medicine than Dr. Osler, for every vapid windjammer in the land. It is, in brief, the reaction of ignorance against the rockiness of the road to learning. It enables any fool to master all wisdom by reading a single \$1.10 book.

Let this be said for Dr. Marden: that he is far less absurd than most other prophets of the New Thought. I have picked out the worst things in his book. In the main it is devoted to the quite reasonable and even obvious thesis that the will must always precede the deed. With that thesis I have no quarrel, but upon its New Thought corollary that the deed must infallibly follow the will I bring down a club. By what process of

willing will a one-legged man ever manage to perform a Wiener waltz? And by what process of willing will a man with a charge of buckshot in his hips ever manage to convince himself that he is lolling comfortably in a Morris chair reading Rabelais and smoking a dollar cigar?

Ezra Pound, author of "PROVENÇA" (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.00), tells us frankly that his chief aim is to sound a revolt against that puerile kittenishness which marks so much of latter day English poetry. Nine-tenths of our living makers and singers it would seem are women, and fully two-thirds of these women are ladies. The result is a boudoir tinkle in the tumult of the lyre. Our poets are afraid of passion; the realities of life alarm them; the good red sun sends them scurrying. Instead of celebrating with their wind music "great deeds, strong men, hearts hot, thoughts mighty," they

dream pale flowers,
Slow moving pageantry of hours that languidly
Drop as o'erripened fruit from fallow trees.

Such is Mr. Pound's complaint against the bards of our decadence. In his little book he attacks them, not only with precept, but also with example. That is to say, he himself writes in the clangorous, passionate manner that he advocates—and it must be said for him in all honesty that his stanzas often attain to an arresting and amazing vigor. The pale thing we commonly call beauty is seldom in them. They are rough, uncouth, hairy, barbarous, wild. But once the galloping swing of them is mastered, a sort of stark, heathenish music emerges from the noise. One hears the thumping of a tom-tom. Dionysos and his rogues are at their profane prancing. It is once more the springtime of the world.

Naturally enough, Mr. Pound finds poets—and heroes—to his liking in the Middle Ages—those spacious days of feasting, fighting and hard loving. A ballad of the gibbet, in the manner of Villon and with good François himself the gibbet bird, is one of the best things in the book. Again we have a fine song of the open road, credited to some wanderer of the Campagna in 1309. Yet

again there is the last song of Arnaut of Marvoil, troubadour to the Countess of Beziers in the twelfth century. From the Provençal of Bertrams de Born comes a lament upon the death of Prince Henry Plantagenet, elder brother to the Lion Heart; from Lope de Vega comes a song to the Virgin Mother; from Jaufre Rudel and Arnaut Daniel certain fantastic canzon forms. Bertrams bawls vociferously in a battle song:

Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle re-
joicing,
Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing!
Better one hour's stour than a year's peace
With fat boards, bawds, wine and frail music!
Bah! There's no wine like the blood's crimson!

"The Ballad of the Goodly Fere" (*i.e.*, mate, companion) is Mr. Pound's only venture into the old English ballad form, but here he achieves a remarkable imitation, not only of the form, but also of the *naïf* spirit of the early tales in rhyme. It is Simon the Apostle that speaks, "some while after the crucifixion." A few stanzas follow:

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men,
I ha' seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free;
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea;
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

*I ha' seen him eat o' the honeycomb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.*

Mr. Pound is an American, but he had to go to England to gain recognition. The present volume, I believe, is the first book from his hand to be printed in this country. It has defects a-plenty. More than once the very earnestness of the poet destroys the effect he essays to produce. His violence at times grows almost comic. One recalls the early profanities of Kipling. But, considered as a whole, this little collection of verses is one of the most striking that has come from the press in late years. Here we

have a poet with something to say and with the skill to say it in a new way, eloquently, sonorously and sometimes almost magnificently.

A maker of simpler songs, which never wander from the orthodox canons, is Helen Hay Whitney, whose new book "HERBS AND APPLES" is sumptuously bound and illustrated (*Lane*, \$1.25). In some of Mrs. Whitney's compositions one discovers little more than an effort to arrange words prettily. But that effort, it must be said, is nearly always successful, and now and then there is in addition a thought worthy of its setting. Much the same tuneful facility is apparent in Myrtle Reed's "SONNETS TO A LOVER" (*Putnam*, \$1.00). I hear no deep note in these sonnets, but there is no denying their unfailing melodiousness, their simple dignity, their good workmanship. In John B. Tabb's posthumous "LATER POEMS" (*Kennerley*, \$1.25) the merits and defects of his earlier work are again visible. It is the custom among the critics to refer to Father Tabb as an artificer in cameo. There is aptness in the metaphor, for while a brilliant beauty often characterizes his patiently wrought fragments, many of them also reveal a quality which can only be described as hardness. Too often, indeed, they are not poems at all but merely beautiful epigrams. A word of praise must be given to Mr. Kennerley's book making. We have come to expect good taste in this publisher's issues, but here he sets himself a new standard.

The minor bards—God bless 'em! First comes Gazelle Stevens Sharp, with "A LITTLE PATCH O' BLUE" (*Badger*, \$1.00), a pleasant collection of homely and unpretentious rhymes. The divine fire, I regret to say, is not in Mrs. Sharp, but her outlook upon life is healthy and sane and a sense of humor halts her at the brink of bathos. I have read worse. Far more ambitious stuff is in "CACTUS AND PINE," by Sharlot M. Hall (*Sherman-French*, \$1.50), a collection of verses dealing chiefly with the great Southwest. Miss Hall has got something of the mystery and magic of that sun-baked wilderness into her lines.

Obviously a disciple of Kipling, it must be said that the offerings she brings to his shrine certainly do him no discredit. Her "Song of the Colorado" is a truly excellent piece of writing, eloquent, galloping and full of color, and in many another place she gives ample promise of still better work later on. Let her be made welcome.

Let me commend "THE LADY," by Emily James Putnam (*Sturgis-Walton*, \$2.50), to all whose taste is for a serious social study brilliantly written. Mrs. Putnam makes no attempt to reduce the lady to a formula; the type has varied too much in detail and is fundamentally too vague and elusive to permit of that. But she has sketched for us with great skill the ladies of eight distinct epochs—the Greek lady of Socrates's day, imprisoned in her marble cage; the rebellious and manumitted lady of the Roman decline; the lady abbess, with her feudal splendors and prerogatives; the chatelaine of the twelfth century; the lady of the Italian Renaissance, inventor of the corset; the intellectual ladies of the French and English salons; and finally, the half-mythical and wholly pathetic lady of the Old South. There is warmth and color in these sketches; one puts down the book with a sense of having seen life creep into faded wax-works. It is a pleasure to call attention to a volume showing so much patient inquiry, so much discernment, and above all, so much charm of style.

"FAMOUS IMPOSTORS," by Bram Stoker (*Sturgis-Walton*, \$2.00), is entirely bare of these merits. It is a formless and uninteresting collection of papers upon Perkin Warbeck, the Tichborne Claimant, Cagliostro, the Princess Olive and other such frauds. Half a dozen extremely dull stories of petty swindles and practical jokes are added. In "BARBAROUS MEXICO," by John Kenneth Turner (*Kerr*, \$1.50), the author overwhelms the reader with proofs that Señor Diaz of that so-called republic is a bold, bad man; that he winks at the enslavement of peons and the murder of Yaquis; that he has no more gentleness in him than the darky around the corner who bites off puppies' tails.

Let us admit it all. But what of it? How long would a gentle, sentimental Diaz hold his job and keep the country going? How are you to make peons work save by enslaving them? What is there to do with Yaquis save murder them? Mr. Turner apologizes to the Mexicans for calling their country barbarous. He says that it is really Diaz that is barbarous. He is wrong. Diaz is civilized, unemotional, imaginative, intelligent. The Mexicans themselves are the barbarians—and the only way to rule barbarians is to treat them as such. Diaz is no more responsible for that law of nature than he is for the fact that manganese is indigestible. Dry your tears, O Turner! You weep because hawks are not handsaws.

The pretty little BEACON BIOGRAPHIES, which have long included monographs upon Longfellow, Paine and other such second raters, have been lately enriched by the addition of volumes upon Washington and Franklin, the former by Worthington Chauncey Ford and the latter by Lindsay Swift (*Small-Maynard*, 50 cents each). Much praise may be justly given to each book. It is no easy thing to review the crowded life of a great man in 150-odd small pages, but it is here done with skill and discrimination by both authors. Chronologies and bibliographies are added, but indices, which would be useful, are omitted.

Israel Zangwill, in his "ITALIAN FANTASIES" (*Macmillan*, \$2.00), sometimes descends to the puerile vice of fine writing. There are too many "'tises" and "'twases" in his discourse; his sentences are polished just a bit too highly. But the matter of these essays and rhapsodies, as distinct from the manner, is of a rare and satisfying quality. It was not as a mere gaper at marvels that Mr. Zangwill loafed through Italy, but as an artist of the seeing eye, a mellow and mature philosopher. Naples set him to meditating upon dead cities, dying creeds, forgotten Christs; in Pisa it was Galileo rather than the Leaning Tower that engaged him; the ballet at La Scala, by some strange magic, turned his thoughts upon the failures of sci-

ence; at Assisi, of course, it was St. Francis that stood in the foreground, but not by any means the St. Francis of orthodox legend. A genial and discursive book, filled with the reflective accumulations of half a lifetime—quaint odds and ends of thoughts, happy phrases, novel heresies, frank confessions of faith, half-tones, half-lights, intimations.

MRS. FEATHERWEIGHT'S MUSICAL MOMENTS—

by John Brady.

(*Harriman*, 75 cents)

Good-natured flings at musical pretenders, with excellent comic drawings by the author.

THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY—
by Gustave Flaubert.

(*Harriman*, \$1.25)

The late Lafcadio Hearn's painstaking and colorful translation of the great Frenchman's prose epic.

BROWN COUNTY FOLKS—
by Kin Hubbard.

(*Martin*, \$1.00)

Another of Mr. Hubbard's collections of homely apothegms—for example: "Th' best Saturday bargain is a bath"—this time with the addition of a grotesquely funny burlesque novel, "The Lost Heiress of Red Stone Hall."

A VALID RELIGION FOR THE TIMES—
by Parley P. Womer.

(*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.00)

An earnest plea for a new Reformation, with the object in view of completely ridding Christianity of ecclesiasticism.

THE COURT OF LUCIFER—
by Nathan Gallizier.

(*Page*, \$1.50)

The third volume of a trilogy dealing with medieval Italy and the dread doings of the Borgias. The illustrations and decorations are of unusual splendor.

THE SCIENCE OF BEING WELL—
by Wallace D. Wattles.

(*Towne*, \$1.00)

In this slim book the author tells what he knows about physiology.

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By MARION C. TAYLOR

THE SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT will be glad to offer suggestions or answer questions regarding shopping and the New York shops. Readers of the SMART SET inquiring for names of shops where articles described are purchasable should inclose a stamp for reply, and state page and month. Address: "EDITOR, SMART SET SHOPPING DEPARTMENT."

PROBABLY when you read this it will be spring. I hope so. The ground hog having disgraced himself for all time, we can only hope that spring *will* come, for it's just a little provoking to have foulards shown you, mulls displayed on every hand and hats exhibited so alluring that you simply cannot resist them, and then when you do buy not to be able to wear them. I know of nothing more annoying than actually to have a bewitching spring hat, the most becoming you have ever had, and then to awake each morning and still see it snowing. Of course you can wear it if it is only cold, but it makes one a little ridiculous to have one's June roses buried under a sudden snowfall.

But of course this doesn't prevent you from buying another one on the spot, for in the warm environment of the shop, surrounded by parasols and spring veils, you catch the mood and know that the winter will have to end sometime soon.

Hats

The importations of hats—the first installment of which is almost all over here by this time—give one no end of points. Every season there seems to be one milliner in Paris who outstrips the others and becomes the success of the season.

This year many people say it is Suzanne Talbot, whose hats are refined and yet have a *chic* which is accom-

plished generally by a simple twist or turn of the brim or the proper placement of a feather. The placement of a feather is no small art, by the way, and like a hand at bridge where there is just one card to play, so with a feather there is generally just one place for it on a hat, and woe to the milliner who does not know instinctively where to put it to get the best effect. Among the new hats I noticed many red ones and was not surprised, as a couple of months ago in describing parasols, I think, I asserted my faith in all-red for early wear. It is becoming to many, and with a dark suit or frock gives the necessary spring touch.

Many of the helmet-shaped hats I spoke of two months ago are shown, among the prettiest being a red one of Talbot's with two tiny mercurial wings perched at the top. Poiret has sent a perfect helmet with a tiny black brim and a white crown and a row of red satin cherries or apples primly arranged in a row across the front of the brim.

Many of these early hats show large round crowns, often quite high, and small up or down-turning brims—more apt to be the former. An all-red hemp one—American Beauty shade, to be exact—had this crown and small up-turned brim, around which was what looked like a string of small self-colored silk rings strung close together. The only trimming was an ostrich chou of the same tone at the side back. This

was a Lewis model and a universally becoming hat.

A Successful Milliner

All these hats I saw in an Avenue shop where the milliner has had a really remarkable success with the best people, those who are not looking for sensational hats but smart becoming models. Much of the success has seemed to be due to the fact that, although the cream of the Paris shops is brought over each season, the models originated in the shop itself are every bit if not more successful. And the tailored hats have always appeared to me to be the most successful of all, for when the trimming consists of just a bow, a quill or a cabochon and the result is a hat of distinction, success is sure to come to any shop.

Utility Frocks

By this heading, which I guess seems a pretty broad term, I mean the one-piece dresses, serges, silks and the like, which one puts on in the morning in the spring in town and shops and lunches in in perfect comfort—those convenient, button-in-the-front frocks one puts on in the country and motors or travels into town in, than which there is no more necessary garment in one's wardrobe.

There are many of them shown in town but only a few of them are successes, smart and simple, which is no easy achievement. However, I have come across some of them that deserve mention.

There is one shop that is a haven for the particular woman of limited income—another broad term often quite ambiguous, but I mean the woman to whom smart clothes are one necessity and economy another. This shop I speak of shows many models that are in simple good taste and may in many cases be slightly changed by the addition of smart neckwear, etc. But the two I shall describe could hardly be improved upon.

The first is a very dark blue one-piece frock of serge and meteor satin. The serge is cleverly introduced on the portions that receive the hardest wear,

on the bottom, as a flounce or band, running up the front panel and in the cuffs of the three-quarter sleeve. A little rose-colored satin is introduced near the neck of the waist and a white yoke softens it.

The second of these is as smart as can be, a copy of a Martial et Armand model of small black and white check cloth. It has the popular one revers, in front and back; this revers is partly of black satin edged with the material of the frock. The satin is repeated at the edge of the deep turn-back cuffs of the three-quarter sleeves. The skirt comes a little above the waist line and the side opening runs in a slanting line to knee depth, where it drops almost straight to the hem. The skirt and the waist fasten with very smart, large, diamond-shaped satin-covered buttons and simulated buttonholes also of satin. A tablier which hangs loose in the back is a very good point. It is button and satin-trimmed and gives no little distinction. A yoke made of bands of smartly embroidered red taffeta topped with Irish lace gives just the proper finish.

Both these frocks are very reasonable and well made of good material. One could safely wear them almost anywhere in the daytime and be comfortable and smart.

A Novel Frock

Intended for general wear and quick getting about and conforming to the modern idea of as little bother as possible, is a two-piece frock on view in one of the dressmaking establishments in town. But the two pieces are not by any means waist and skirt, as one might imagine. The under piece is a princess consisting of a waist which runs down into knee length knickerbockers. The yoke of this waist and the three-quarter sleeves in the one I saw were of two contrasting shades of chiffon, the belt of a soft shade of silk, the rest of the garment of soft lining satin. Over this was slipped a one-piece serge frock; the waist, a very simple kimono trimmed with a little black braiding around the yoke, was joined to the skirt by a black

silk cord which laced the two together and allowed the soft-toned belt underneath to show through. The skirt, which fitted smoothly over the hips and was held in place by its weight, had a simulated tunic trimmed with the braid and a tablier in the back. This or a similar model could also be made to button in front for the many women who demand a frock they can get into themselves, and seemed to me a very clever and novel idea, especially for traveling by train or motor where one is so glad to dispense with a petticoat. It was charming made up in black satin, too, and in fact has a host of possibilities.

Two Good Coats

One always keeps a weather eye open for smart wraps and coats, and two have already come to my notice that are splendid.

The first is a motor or traveling coat in one of the new rajahs in the natural shade, cut with a loose straight back, armholes which come out squarely from a little above the waist line in true kimono fashion and a round fairly deep collar which runs into deep pointed revers. The sleeves are perfectly straight and end in cuffs of black satin, of which the collar is also made. The lining is of an American Beauty shade of soft satin, delightfully toned and giving the needed color. Of course it comes with other smart linings, but this seemed the prettiest.

The other wrap gains distinction from its plain straight lines and the beautiful colors it is shown in. It is an evening wrap of soft, self-toned, brocaded crêpe, and has an empire waist effect which is in one piece with the center back panel, resulting in a perfect long straight line in the back that is immensely becoming. The skirt part is perfectly plain of course; and where the waist line is joined to it in front and the coat fastens are two large diamond-shaped braid ornaments fringed at the bottom, the only trimming except the black satin shawl collar and the plain cuffs to the kimono sleeves. The lining is one of those very new coin-dotted chiffons, the

large dots arranged in broad bands. But a description does not in any way do justice to the wrap. In the first place, the colors in which it comes are most beautiful, greens, blues, American Beauty, tan and black, as well as a beautiful white which has an all-white lining. The brocaded crêpe is soft and light and yet has just enough body to insure the needed warmth. It seems to me an ideal wrap for spring and summer.

A Smart Satin Gown

Another of those useful affairs that one can slip on for general wear and yet smart enough to lunch in at a hotel or restaurant was shown me the other day, and I quite fell in love with its air of refined exclusiveness. From Bischoff-David, the original has now been copied at a moderate price. I saw it in black and dark blue *cachemire de soie*; the latter I thought smarter for spring. A small plain yoke about four inches deep, edged on all sides with a satin-covered cord, extended from back to front over the shoulders, but only to the top of the sleeves. The waist was shirred onto this rather full. The sleeves were fairly loose, coming to a little below the elbow. They were finished by a three or four-inch self-tone satin cuff which was very wide. It was covered with a second cuff of ecru embroidered batiste, and a couple of inches from the outer edge of the sleeve the cuff, although it did not open, was held together like a shirt cuff by two large brown bone buttons which acted as cuff buttons. The waist was finished by quite a narrow Eton collar of the satin and batiste, and where this opened in front and back was another bone button. The skirt was very simple with a wide back panel which hung loose from knee depth. The hem was edged along the top with the tiniest satin-covered buttons imaginable set close together. By the way, tiny buttons used plentifully trim many of the smartest models. But the prettiest touch on this gown was the soft four-inch purple satin girdle which ended in a modified geisha bow in back and a narrow oblong self-covered

buckle in front. It was one of the simplest, prettiest frocks I've seen.

Good Models in Linen

Among the many models there are as usual but few exceptionally good ones. One which comes in all colors in a moderately heavy linen has self-tone embroidered coin dots possibly a little larger than a quarter which run up either side of the V-shaped front and back opening of the waist, down the shoulder of the elbow length kimono sleeves, and around their edge, also down the center of the skirt to knee depth, where they separate and widen to the hem. A chemisette is of soft handkerchief linen and Irish lace insertion.

The second has a simple self-toned braid embroidery band trimming, which follows the outline of the Dutch neck and crosses in bretelle fashion, front and back. This band, a little wider, is repeated on the skirt. A third model has an accompanying short coat and gains its novelty from its colored eyelet embroidery, which is already a popular feature of the summer gowns shown. This one has a very smart square apron front panel and comes in almost all color combinations.

A Genuine Bargain

One of the very best shops in town, well known for its first class smart apparel and its reliability, is putting forth a linen suit that is so good and such a genuine bargain that I determined not only to recommend but also to mention the price, a thing I rarely do. The suit is made up in all colors and in two weights of linen of the best quality, samples of which will gladly be sent if desired: one a heavy linen crash, the other a fine French linen. There are two models in the coats, both of which are the smart and popular hip length with plain tailored sleeves smartly finished with buttons and buttonholes; the lines of the coats are the new straight ones which may easily be fitted more closely if desired. One coat is plain with unobtrusive pockets at the

bottom; the other is finished with hip and breast patch pockets, the flaps of which button down with pearl buttons.

The skirts are gored and of a sensible width with smart straight lines, and they button down the side front, which is absolutely the only way to have a linen skirt made that is tubbed frequently. These buttons are on a line with those of the coat, which buttons over to one side. I can't imagine a more sensible, a smarter or a better made suit, and it sells for twenty dollars. Further comment seems unnecessary.

Tailored Hats

In a small shop gradually forming a reputation for carrying only the smartest things I saw several very good models in tailored hats.

One, a multicolored straw, a season's feature, had greens, blues and reds in the mixture. It was a simple, rolling sailor faced with blue velvet, and had as trimming two earlike wings made of the blue velvet backed with cherry-colored velvet.

Another modified rolling sailor of the new rajah webbing was faced with black and had a smart upstanding ostrich fancy. A very good turban of mixed straw fitted well down over the head, so necessary in a hat for general wear, and had a very odd quill-like affair in front formed of a pyramid of smart rose-colored bows. An 1812 poke with button roses was quaint and decidedly becoming to a young pretty face.

I mention these hats because they were decidedly prettier than the general run, and also exclusive, being original conceptions of the establishments and not likely to be seen elsewhere.

Charming Negligées

There is nothing a woman likes more or takes more comfort in than a becoming negligée. A small shop in town is showing two especially attractive ones.

The first, a simple affair to slip over one's nightgown and breakfast in, is of a silk crêpe lined with China silk. Its only trimming is a ribbon of the same

color which laces down the front and sleeves. It comes in beautiful shades, and is comfortable, practical and becoming.

The second one, intended for dining intimately or for more formal boudoir wear, was of a pink crêpe beautifully trimmed with soft lace. To accompany it was a beautiful sleeveless coat of pale blue net embroidered in self-color and inset with beautiful Irish lace insertion and long slender medallions.

A coat of this sort serves so many purposes; it dresses up an otherwise simple negligée, freshens an old frock and makes a presentable dinner gown of it, and almost always justifies the money put into it.

Spring Neckwear

While the new styles show no radical changes, unless it is the popularity of fichus, there are nevertheless many pleasing varieties in the collar and cuff sets, separate collars and separate frills for the front of waists. Frill waists are more popular than ever and the frills are quite wide. All-white frills are popular on colored as well as white waists, and one frequently sees the idea reversed; the frill and the cuffs in this case show the only note of color.

It is fortunate that one can buy these attractive white frills separate for they will so often smarten a blouse in its second stage of wear. They come very reasonably in one shop in town, and the cheapest of them are good-looking.

Here I also saw the new deep round French collars of lace and embroidered batiste which accompany so many French frocks. They reach sometimes almost to the waist line in back and are rounded. Again they are quite short but narrow and oddly shaped.

Fichus are going to be worn to death I imagine, before the season is over, but it is a delightfully becoming fashion to some types, so let us rejoice. Quite the prettiest ones are soft and gossamerlike mulls, swisses, etc., frequently embroidered but equally pretty if not even smarter when they are perfectly plain with a fine knife-plaited frill edging them. They will be worn with foulards,

soft, dark satin frocks (they are so good on a simple all-black frock) and the lighter weight summer materials.

Then, too, here is another rejuvenator, for one may effectively disguise last season's foulard with but a few changes and the addition of a fichu.

A Real Find

I think that there is nothing surer of a cordial reception than a collar boning which will actually hold the collar up, be almost invisible (can't you see those dreadful half-inch wide spikes some women consider necessary to accomplish this?) and last but not least, will not scratch or rub one's neck and leave a telltale red mark. Some time ago I heard some friends rejoicing over one they had found, and they told me I should learn of it and write it up. I intended to look into it eventually—and after I had heard it recommended four or five times more, I decided I must be on the right track of something good, and good it surely is. It is made of what seems to me to be a fine washable silk-covered wire which starts in a little round ring at the top and then zigzags down, getting ever narrower toward the bottom and ending in another ring. Both of the latter are given an extra covering of the silk thread to prevent rubbing or scratching. They are put in hermetically sealed transparent envelopes, which contain three or five supports, and of course they come in various heights. You see, they are remarkably light in weight, hardly show at all, and yet are quite strong enough, without being stiff, to support the highest collar perfectly.

Convenient Vanity Fittings

Fortunately it is no longer considered a crime to use rouge, and most women who believe in looking as well as they can at all times feel the need of it occasionally.

There is really only one rouge that is natural in effect, and this is now put up in small round boxes a little smaller than a silver dollar, with a mirror on the top

and a tiny puff. The rouge is in a cake which will not crumble, and the whole is of a convenient size to slip into one's purse or vanity bag. In the shop where I saw this they have a powder put up in a cake, which besides coming in the various shades is delicately perfumed in one's favorite odor—a splendid idea and one sure of success.

A novelty just put out by one of the Avenue silversmiths is a tiny flat oval silver box for hairpins that will make an attractive accessory on one's dressing table and slip in any tiny space in packing.

A New Leather

For smart spring bags nothing is prettier than a new French morocco leather in turkey red that is being shown in one of the best shops in town. Bags, photo frames, card cases and other novelties are shown in it.

The bags show new pierced silver tops that are most attractive. This shop is well known for its beautiful leather goods and one of their windows recently attracted no little attention. It was completely filled with things in leather from the tiniest card cases to a tortoise shell-fitted bag of elephant leather. These things were grouped around the head of the elephant which supplied the skin.

As most people know, the elephant's skin is one of the rarest but best wearing leathers on the market, and this skin was a very fine specimen which is extremely hard to secure. Besides being attractive from a display standpoint it was an illustration of the high grade goods carried by the establishment. They also carry the finest collection of beaded bags, card cases, etc., in town, reproducing perfectly the most famous antique museum pieces.

A Good Hair Tonic

I came across a really splendid preparation recently which actually does what it is supposed to, no small thing today.

It is a hair tonic which *will* prevent the hair from falling, stimulate the growth and keep the scalp in a healthy

condition. It is guaranteed by the reputable firm who are putting it on the market and is really a remarkable remedy.

A Commodious Trunk

Recently put on the market by possibly the best known maker of trunks in America is a trunk which for convenience and economy of space would be well nigh impossible of improvement. In the first place it stands on end, taking up the smallest possible space when in use, and opens directly in the center. One side is devoted to space for hanging clothes. At the top is a device which pulls out, containing ten arms with hangers; for a woman each of these arms with its accompanying hanger is capable of holding two to three gowns. The top hanger on the arm opens, a skirt is inserted and it is clamped close, forming a perfect hanger for either skirts or trousers. Underneath this is a detachable hanger upon which separate waists may be hung, and over both of these a one-piece frock may be hung, which balances the whole perfectly and holds all in place when the hangers are shoved into the space allotted them. The opposite side is devoted to drawers which are conveniently divided, in some cases left plain, in others including a man's or woman's hat box or some small drawers for accessories. Not the smallest point of importance regarding these trunks is that once purchased they are always kept in repair for you, and whether you be in Hong Kong or Algiers you will find an agency always glad to repair the ordinary damages free of charge.

For the Country Home

A delightful set of ten posters done in a soft gray and white and simply but artistically framed in flat white enamel frames is ideal for the country, where one is allowed no little latitude in the selection of pictures, and where subjects of a lighter character are more in keeping with the surroundings. These are French posters and represent "A Little Adventure of Little Pierrot;" they in-

clude Columbine and Harlequin of course, and a cat, a rabbit, a dog and a goose. From the first, "La Presentation," through "Les Reproches" to "La Reconciliation," which ends their troubles and the tale, one is more charming than the next, and fortunately any one of them with its explanatory title is complete. For a nursery I know of no more delightful pictures, and I venture they are almost equally sure of pleasing the grown-ups.

A country home is unknowable without a profusion of flowers about, and enough of the proper sort of receptacles for them are oftentimes difficult to find. Quaint flower baskets from Japan, which are fitted with a metal lining, come in a delightful dark brown shade and are made of strips of bamboo which are smoked and polished. They may be hung about the room, or on the porch in some cases, or stand about the room, and the many graceful shapes in which they come add greatly to their charm.

Helen Pink

You remember of course the one time popularity of "Alice blue"—alas, no more; so you were probably expecting something like "Helen pink" or "Helen rose," said to be the favorite color of the daughter of the White House. One of the windows of an Avenue shop held last week a beautiful display of notepaper in this delicate shade, striped in the popular spring fashion of which I spoke last month. There is a little latitude allowed in summer stationery and I have no doubt many will adopt this new shade. Another new idea of this shop is a very practical one, that of an extra fifth sheet which is attached to the fourth or back page of the original sheet. This serves several purposes. For one thing, it protects the writing, that is, presents a blank surface against the envelope which many people insist on and arrive at only by leaving the fourth page blank, thereby giving them but three pages upon which to write. Then again this sheet gives just a little more space, which can often be used to so much advantage.

Shirtings

First for men: one of the shops in town is showing a really beautiful line of linen and silk shirtings, the best-looking patterns I have seen, which are made up much more reasonably than at most shops; and secondly for women: the beautiful wash silks in the very prettiest stripes imaginable are quite the smartest things for tailored shirts, and one shop in town decidedly undersells most of the others and shows a great variety of patterns.

New Records

Last month I said that the records were exceptionally good. This month I cannot help saying that they are even better.

Popular ones are a double record of Yale songs and a Yale march, namely, "Eli Yale" and "Dear Old Yale," the college anthem on one side and a comparatively new march, "Men of Yale," on the other, and "Rockin' in de Win'," the beautiful Neidlinger lullaby sung by Marguerite Dunlap. But it is the operatic records that called forth my enthusiasm.

Heading the list is the great Fourth Act duet between Amneris and Rhadames in "Aida," which is rendered superbly by Caruso and Homer. It is in two records and fills a long felt want. Then there is another beautiful duet, the great Azucena-Manrico duet from "Il Trovatore," also sung by Caruso and Homer.

But none is more beautiful than the Siciliana which is now given, by Caruso of course, with a harp accompaniment. I doubt if there is a more popular record, the Intermezzo possibly excepted, from "Cavalleria Rusticana" than this serenade of Turriddu's to Lola sung before the curtain rises. To add to this list is the favorite "Habanera" from "Carmen," sung with no little artistic beauty by Gerville-Réache. Last but not least is the curiosity of the month, a nightingale's song, actually sung by the bird, one of the few captive birds in existence by the way.

SOMETHING PERSONAL

FRANK A. MUNSEY was the first magazine publisher to invite the Gentle Reader behind the scenes. The public seemed to relish these confidences, and when some eight years ago I became one of the publishers of "Everybody's Magazine," we decided to establish a similar department. For a year or more we told of our successes and sometimes our troubles—for publishers do have troubles—until our circulation, mounting at the rate of fifty thousand copies a month, confronted us with a host of problems which all but crowded this pleasant gossip from our thoughts. I enjoyed these little talks, some of which I wrote at night when the offices, like Union Square below, were silent; and I have reason to believe that our great public enjoyed them, too. Because of this belief, I am choosing the same informal method of approaching the readers of the SMART SET.

Whenever the daily press prints the news that a magazine has changed hands, the reading public scans the succeeding issues for whirlwind changes.

BUT—

The modern magazine must be prepared months ahead. Thus, on February 20th, when the sale of this property was completed, the entire April issue was on the presses. There has accordingly been time only to change the name of the publisher on the cover and add this page to what we might call the advertising section, if so few announcements deserve so high-sounding a title.

I have it on the authority of the Editors that this is a "pretty good number," and as the public has for some years stamped its approval on their work, I must needs agree with them. The May number I have found in a less advanced state, and it will without doubt make a greater appeal to our readers than any issue in the recent past.

With the *June number*, the first wholly under the new ownership, there will be—what? "A magazine like 'Everybody's'?" many have asked. No, indeed. That magazine is the result of long years of hard work, study and progression along certain lines. There is no room for a second "Everybody's," and I have no desire to publish one. The SMART SET has for a decade had a distinct individuality. A "magazine of cleverness" from the outset, it will suffer no loss of quality.

Arrangements now under way for the benefit of contributors will insure the magazine first call on some of the very best fiction now being written in the English language. Two well known writers, Mark Lee Luther and Louise Closser Hale, have joined our staff as Associate Editors. The Managing Editor will be Norman Boyer, who for two years has so efficiently filled this post. Combined they will spare no pains to make the SMART SET an even more striking exponent of originality and cleverness in literature. If you like the SMART SET now, we are sure of your future allegiance.

But—we want your coöperation. Tell us what you like about the SMART SET. Tell us, quite as frankly, what you don't like. Help us make this little corner a clearing house of ideas.





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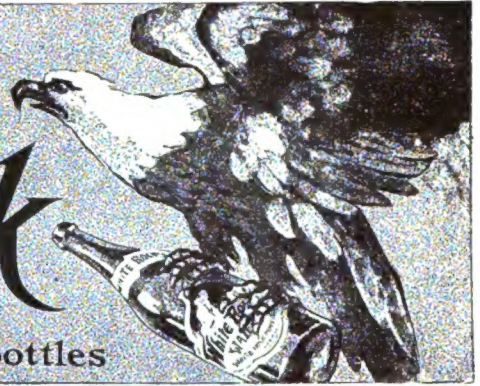
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